

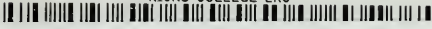


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**COMMENTARY:**

**CRITICAL, PRACTICAL AND EXPLANATORY,**

**ON**

**THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,**

**BY**

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**WITH ▲**

**BIBLE DICTIONARY,**

**COMPILED FROM DR. WM. SMITH'S STANDARD WORK,**

**—▲—**

**COPIOUS INDEX,**

**CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES, MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS:**

**OLD TESTAMENT—VOL. I**

***GENESIS—PSALMS.***

**FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY**

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## NOTE OF THE AMERICAN PUBLISHERS.

The publication of the present work has been undertaken in consequence of the general demand for a popular commentary on the whole Bible, which should embody the results of modern Biblical research and scholarship. Enriched with the fruits of learning more varied and advanced, and of interpretation more critical and exact than can be found in the older popular commentaries, it will undoubtedly afford to families, Sabbath Schools, and English readers generally, more help in the study of the Scriptures than any other work yet issued from the press.

The letter press is an accurate reprint of the English edition.

Believing that a series of illustrations would not only add to its beauty, but greatly enhance its usefulness and value, numerous appropriate engravings are given in this edition, consisting of views of Historical Localities, Maps, and Illustrations of Natural History, Manners, Customs and Costumes, &c.

2342

Authors Quoted and Abbreviations.

A. NEWTON... Miss Adelaide Newton.  
BO ..... Bochart.  
BENG ..... Bengel.  
BURR ..... Burrowes.  
COCC ..... Cocceius.  
DE W ..... De Wette.  
DUR ..... Durham.  
EICH ..... Eichorn.  
GES ..... Gesenius.  
GROT ..... Grotius, Annot. in Act.  
Apost.  
HOL ..... Holden.  
HENGST ..... Hengstenberg.  
LINN ..... Linnaeus.  
MICH ..... Michaelis.  
MAUR ..... Maurer of Helligstedt.  
M. STUART ... Moody Stuart.  
NOY ..... Noyes.  
PARKH ..... Parkhurst.  
RAWL ..... Rawlinson.  
ROS ..... Rosenmuller.  
SCH ..... Schuttens.  
SOUTH ..... Southey.

TALM ..... Talmud.  
UMBR ..... Umbreit.  
O. T. .... Old Testament.  
N. T. .... New Testament.  
N. S. E. W.. North, South, East, West.  
Cf. (confer), meaning *Compare*.  
LIT ..... Literally.  
FIG ..... Figuratively.  
SING ..... Singular.  
PLUR ..... Plural.  
EX. GR. .... For example's sake.  
TRANSL ..... Translate, Translation.  
NOM ..... Nominative.  
GR. .... Greek.  
E. V. .... English Version.  
LXX ..... The Septuagint Greek Version  
of the O. T., written  
at Alexandria for Hellen-  
istic Jews.  
ARAB ..... Arabic Version.  
SYR. .... The Syriac Version.  
VULG ..... Vulgate, Latin Version of  
Jerome.

MAR 27 '52



# INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## PENTATEUCH AND HISTORICAL BOOKS.

THE Pentateuch, the name by which the first five books of the Bible are designated, is derived from two Greek words, *pente*, five, and *teuchos*, a volume, thus signifying the fivefold volume. Originally, these books formed one continuous work, as in the Hebrew manuscripts, they are still connected in one unbroken roll. At what time they were divided into five portions, each having a separate title, is not known, but it is certain that the distinction dates at or before the time of the *Septuagint* translation. The names they bear in our English version are borrowed from the LXX., and they were applied by those Greek translators as descriptive of the principal subjects, the leading contents of the respective books. In the later Scriptures they are frequently comprehended under the general designation, *The Law*, *The Book of the Law*, since, to give a detailed account of the preparations for, and the delivery of, the Divine code, with all the civil and sacred institutions that were peculiar to the ancient economy, is the object to which they are exclusively devoted. They have been always placed at the beginning of the Bible, not only on account of their priority in point of time, but as forming an appropriate and indispensable introduction to the rest of the sacred books. The numerous and oft-recurring references made in the later Scriptures to the events, the ritual and the doctrines of the ancient Church, would have not only lost much of their point and significance but have been absolutely unintelligible without the information which these five books contain. They constitute the groundwork or basis on which the whole fabric of revelation rests, and a knowledge of the authority and importance that is thus attached to them will sufficiently account for the determined assaults that infidels have made on these books as well as for the zeal and earnestness which the friends of the truth have displayed in their defense.

The Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch is established by the concurring voices both of Jewish and Christian tradition; and their unanimous testimony is supported by the internal character and statements of the work itself. That Moses did keep a written record of the important transactions relative to the Israelites is attested by his own express affirmation. For in relating the victory over the Amalekites, which he was commanded by Divine authority to record, the language employed, "write this for a memorial in a book (*Hebrew, the book*)" (Exodus, 17. 14), shows that that narrative was to form part of a register already in progress, and various circumstances combine to prove that this register was a continuous history of the special goodness and care of Divine providence in the choice, protection and guidance, of the Hebrew nation. First, there are the repeated assertions of Moses himself that the events which chequered the experience of that people were written down as they occurred (see Exodus, 24. 4-7; 34. 27; Numbers, 33. 2). Secondly, there are the testimonies borne in various parts of the later historical books to the Pentateuch as a work well known and familiar to all the people (see Joshua, 1. 8, 8. 34; 23. 6; 24. 26; 1 Kings, 2. 3, etc.). Thirdly, frequent references are made in the works of the prophets to the facts recorded in the books of Moses (Cf. Isaiah, 1. 9, with Genesis, 19. 1; 12. 2, with Exodus, 15. 2; 51. 2, with Genesis, 12. 2; 54. 9, with Genesis, 8. 21, 22; Hosea, 9. 10; Cf. with Numbers, 21. 3; 11. 8, with Genesis, 19. 24; 12. 4, with Genesis, 32. 24, 25; 12. 12, with Genesis, 28. 5; 29. 20; Joel, 1. 9; Cf. with Numbers, 15. 4-7; 28. 7-14; Deuteronomy, 12. 6, 7; 16. 10, 11; Amos, 2. 9; Cf. with Numbers, 21. 21; 4. 4, with Numbers, 28. 3; 4. 11, with Genesis, 19. 24; 9. 13, with Leviticus, 26. 5; Micah, 6. 5; Cf. with Numbers, 22-25; 6. 6, with Leviticus, 9. 2; 6. 15, with Leviticus, 26. 16, etc. Fourthly, the testimony of Christ and the Apostles is repeatedly borne to the books of Moses (Matthew, 19. 7; Luke, 16. 29; 24. 27; John, 1. 17; 7. 19; Acts, 3. 22; 28. 23; Romans, 10. 5). Indeed, the references are so numerous and the testimonies so distinctly borne to the existence of the Mosaic books throughout the whole history of the Jewish nation, and the unity of character, design and

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style, pervading these books is so clearly perceptible, notwithstanding the rationalistic assertions of their forming a series of separate and unconnected fragments, that it may with all safety be said, there is immensely stronger and more varied evidence in proof of their being the authorship of Moses than of any of the Greek or Roman classics being the productions of the authors whose names they bear. But, admitting that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, an important question arises, as to whether the books which compose it have reached us in an authentic form; whether they exist genuine and entire as they came from the hands of their author. In answer to this question, it might be sufficient to state that, in the public and periodical rehearsals of the law in the solemn religious assemblies of the people, implying the existence of numerous copies, provision was made for preserving the integrity of "The Book of the Law." But besides this, two remarkable facts, the one of which occurred before and the other after the captivity, afford conclusive evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch. The first is the discovery, in the reign of Josiah, of the autograph copy which was deposited by Moses in the ark of the testimony; and the second is the schism of the Samaritans, who erected a temple on Mount Gerizim, and who, appealing to the Mosaic law as the standard of their faith and worship equally with the Jews, watched with jealous care over every circumstance that could affect the purity of the Mosaic record. There is the strongest reason then for believing that the Pentateuch, as it exists now, is substantially the same as it came from the hands of Moses. The appearance of a later hand, it is true, is traceable in the narrative of the death of Moses at the close of Deuteronomy and some few interpolations, such as inserting the altered names of places, may have been made by Ezra who revised and corrected the version of the ancient Scriptures. But, substantially, the Pentateuch is the genuine work of Moses, and many, who once impugned its claims to that character and looked upon it as the production of a later age, have found themselves compelled, after a full and unprejudiced investigation of the subject, to proclaim their conviction that its authenticity is to be fully relied on.

The genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch being admitted, the inspiration and canonical authority of the work follow as a necessary consequence. The admission of Moses to the privilege of frequent and direct communion with God (Exodus, 25. 22; 33. 3; Numbers, 7. 89; 9. 8); his repeated and solemn declarations that he spoke and wrote by command of God; the submissive reverence that was paid to the authority of his precepts by all classes of the Jewish people, including the king himself (Deuteronomy, 17. 18; 27. 3); and the acknowledgment of the Divine mission of Moses by the writers of the New Testament, all prove the inspired character and authority of his books. The Pentateuch possessed the strongest claims on the attention of the Jewish people, as forming the standard of their faith, the rule of their obedience, the record of their whole civil and religious polity. But it is interesting and important to all mankind, inasmuch as besides revealing the origin and early development of the Divine plan of grace, it is the source of all authentic knowledge, giving the true philosophy, history, geography and chronology, of the ancient world. Finally, the Pentateuch "is indispensable to the whole revelation contained in the Bible; for Genesis being the legitimate preface to the law; the law being the natural introduction to the Old Testament; and the whole a prelude to the gospel revelation, it could not have been omitted. What the four Gospels are in the New, the five books of Moses are in the Old Testament."

GENESIS, the book of the origin or production of all things, consists of two parts: The first, comprehended in chs. 1-11, gives a general; the second, contained in the subsequent chapters, gives a special history. The two parts are essentially connected; the one, which sets out with an account of the descent of the human race from a single pair, the introduction of sin into the world, and the announcement of the scheme of Divine mercy for repairing the ruins of the fall, was necessary to pave the way for relating the other, viz., the call of Abraham and the selection of his posterity for carrying out the gracious purpose of God. An evident unity of method, therefore, pervades this book, and the information contained in it was of the greatest importance to the Hebrew people, as without it they could not have understood the frequent references made in their law to the purposes and promises of God regarding themselves. The arguments that have been already adduced as establishing the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch prove of course that Moses was the author of Genesis. The few passages on which the rationalists grounded their assertions that it was the composition of a later age have been successfully shown to warrant

## INTRODUCTION.

so such conclusion; the use of Egyptian words and the minute acquaintance with Egyptian life and manners, displayed in the history of Joseph, harmonize with the education of Moses, and whether he received his information by immediate revelation, from tradition or from written documents, it comes to us as the authentic work of an author who wrote as he was inspired by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter, 1. 21).

EXODUS, a going forth, derives its name from its being occupied principally with a relation of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and the incidents that immediately preceded as well as followed that memorable migration. Its authorship by Moses is distinctly asserted by himself (Exodus, 24. 4) as well as by our Lord (Mark, 12. 26; Luke, 20. 37). Besides, the thorough knowledge it exhibits of the institutions and usages of the ancient Egyptians, and the minute geographical details of the journey to Sinai, establish in the clearest manner the authenticity of this book.

LEVITICUS, so called from its treating of the laws relating to the ritual, the services and sacrifices of the Jewish religion, the superintendence of which was intrusted to the Levitical priesthood. It is chiefly, however, the duties of the priests, "the sons of Aaron," which this book describes; and its claim to be the work of Moses is established by the following passages: 2 Chronicles, 30. 16; Nehemiah, 8. 14; Jeremiah, 7. 22. 23; Ezekiel, 20. 11; Matthew, 8. .; Luke, 2. 22; John, 8. 5; Romans, 10. 4; 13. 9; 2 Corinthians, 6. 16; Galatians, 3. 12; 1 Peter, 1. 16.

NUMBERS. This book is so called from its containing an account of the enumeration and arrangement of the Israelites. The early part of it, from chs. 1-10, appears to be a supplement to Leviticus, being occupied with relating the appointment of the Levites to the sacred offices. The journal of the march through the wilderness is then given as far as ch. 21. 20; after which the early incidents of the invasion are narrated. One direct quotation only from this book (ch. 16. 5) is made in the New Testament (2 Timothy, 2. 19); but indirect references to it by the later sacred writers are very numerous.

DEUTERONOMY, the *second law*, a title which plainly enough shows what is the object of this book, viz., a recapitulation of the law. It was given in the form of public addresses to the people; and as Moses spoke in the prospect of his speedy removal he enforced obedience to it by many forcible appeals to the Israelites concerning their long and varied experience both of the mercies and the judgments of God. The minute notices of the heathen people with whom they had come in contact, but who afterwards disappeared from the page of history as well as the accounts of the fertility and products of Canaan, and the counsels respecting the conquest of that country, fix the date of this book and the time of its composition by the hand of Moses. The close, however, must have been added by another; and, indeed, is supposed by some to have formed the original preface to the Book of Joshua.

JOSHUA, the title of this book is derived from the pious and valiant leader whose achievements it relates and who is commonly supposed to have been its author. The objections to this idea are founded chiefly on the clause, "unto this day," which occurs several times (ch. 4. 9; 6. 25; 8. 28). But this, at least in the case of Rahab, is no valid reason for rejecting the idea of his authorship; for assuming what is most probable, that this book was composed toward the close of Joshua's long career or compiled from written documents left by him, Rahab might have been still alive. A more simple and satisfactory way of accounting for the frequent insertion of the clause, "unto this day," is the opinion that it was a comment introduced by Ezra when revising the sacred canon; and this difficulty being removed the direct proofs of the book having been produced by a witness of the transactions related in it; the strong and vivid descriptions of the passing scenes and the use of the words "we" and "us" (ch. 5. 1-6), viewed in connection with the fact, that, after his farewell address to the people, Joshua "wrote these words in the book of the law of God," all afford strong presumptive proof that the entire book was the work of that eminent individual. Its inspiration and canonical authority are fully established by the repeated testimonies of other Scripture writers (Cf. ch. 6. 26, with 1 Kings, 16. 34; Cf. ch. 10. 13, with Habakkuk, 3. 11; ch. 3. 14, with Acts, 7. 45; 6. 17-23, with Hebrews, 11. 30; ch. 2, with James, 2. 25; Psalm 44. 2; 68. 12-14; 78. 54, 55). As a narrative of God's faithfulness in giving the Israelites possession of the promised land, this history is most valuable, and bears the same character as a sequel to the Pentateuch that the Acts of the Apostles do to the Gospels.

## INTRODUCTION.

**JUDGES** is the title given to this book, from its containing the history of those non-regal rulers who governed the Hebrews from the time of Joshua to that of Eli, and whose functions in time of peace consisted chiefly in the administration of justice, although they occasionally led the people in their wars against their public enemies. The date and authorship of this book are not precisely known. It is certain, however, that it preceded the Second Book of Samuel (cf. ch. 9. 35 with 2 Samuel 11. 21), as well as the conquest of Jerusalem by David (cf. ch. 1. 21 with 2 Samuel 5. 6). Its author was in all probability Samuel, the last of the judges, (see ch. 19. 1; 21. 25), and the date of the first part of it is fixed in the reign of Saul, while the five chapters at the close might not be written till after David's establishment as king in Israel (see ch. 18. 31). It is a fragmentary history, being a collection of important facts and signal deliverances at different times and in various parts of the land, during the intermediate period of 300 years between Joshua and the establishment of monarchy. The inspired character of this book is confirmed by allusions to it in many passages of Scripture (cf. ch. 4. 2; 6. 14 with 1 Samuel 12. 9-12; ch. 9. 53 with 2 Samuel 12. 21; ch. 7. 25 with Psalm 83. 11; cf. ch. 5. 4, 5 with Psalm 7. 5; ch. 13. 5; 16. 17 with Matthew 2. 13-23; Acts 13. 20; Hebrews 11. 32).

**RUTH** is properly a supplement to the preceding book, to which, in fact, it was appended in the ancient Jewish canon. Although it relates an episode belonging to the time of the Judges, its precise date is unknown. It appears certain, however, that it could not have been written prior to the time of Samuel (see ch. 4. 17-22), who is generally supposed to have been its author; and this opinion, in addition to other reasons on which it rests, is confirmed by ch. 4. 7, where it is evident that the history was not compiled till long after the transactions recorded. The inspiration and canonical authority of the book is attested by the fact of Ruth's name being inserted by Matthew in the Savior's genealogy.

**THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF SAMUEL.**—The two were, by the ancient Jews, conjoined, so as to make one book, and in that form could be called the Book of Samuel with more propriety than now, the second being wholly occupied with the relation of transactions that did not take place till after the death of that eminent judge. Accordingly, in the *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate*, it is called the First and Second Books of Kings. The early portion of the First Book, down to the end of the twenty-fourth chapter, was probably written by Samuel, while the rest of it, and the whole of the Second, are commonly ascribed to Nathan and Gad, founding the opinion on 1 Chronicles 29. 29. Commentators, however, are divided about this, some supposing that the statements in ch. 2. 26; 3. 1, indicate the hand of the judge himself, or a contemporary; while some think, from ch. 6. 18; 12. 5. 27. 6, that its composition must be referred to a later age. It is probable, however, that these supposed marks of an after period were interpolations of Ezra. This uncertainty, however, as to the authorship does not affect the inspired authority of the book, which is indisputable, being quoted in the New Testament (Acts 13. 22; Hebrews (1. 5), as well as in many of the Psalms.

**THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF KINGS,** in the ancient copies of the *Hebrew Bible* constitute one book. Various titles have been given them; in the *Septuagint* and the *Vulgate* they are called the Third and Fourth Books of Kings. The authorship of these books is unknown; but the prevailing opinion is that they were compiled by Ezra, or one of the later prophets, from the ancient documents that are so frequently referred to in the course of the history as of public and established authority. Their inspired character was acknowledged by the Jewish church, which ranked them in the sacred canon; and, besides, is attested by our Lord, who frequently quotes from them (cf. 1 Kings 17. 9; 2 Kings 5. 14 with Luke 4. 24-27; 1 Kings 10. 1 with Matthew 12. 42).

**THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF CHRONICLES** were also considered as one by the ancient Jews, who called them "words of days," *i. e.* diaries or journals, being probably compiled from those registers that were kept by the king's historiographers of passing occurrences. In the *Septuagint* the title given them is Paraleipomenon, "of things omitted." *i. e.*, the books are supplementary, because many things unnoticed in the former books are here recorded; and not only the omissions are supplied, but some narratives extended, while others are added. The authorship is commonly ascribed to Ezra, whose leading object seems to have been to show the division of families, possessions, etc., before the captivity, with a view to the exact restoration of the same order after the return from Babylon. Although many things are re-stated, and others are exact repetitions of what is contained in Kings, there is so much new and important information that, as Jerome has well said, the Chronicles furnish the means of comprehend-



## INTRODUCTION.

ing parts of the New Testament, which must have been unintelligible without them. They are frequently referred to by Christ and the Apostles as forming part of "the Word of God" (see the genealogies in Matthew 1.; Luke 3.; cf. 2 Chronicles 19. 7 with 1 Peter 1. 17; 2 Chronicles 24. 19-21 with Matthew 23. 32-35).

EZRA was, along with Nehemiah, reckoned one book by the ancient Jews, who called them the First and Second Books of Ezra, and they are still designated by Roman Catholic writers the First and Second Books of Esdras. This book naturally divides itself into two parts or sections, the one contained in the first six chapters, and relates the circumstances connected with the return of the first detachment of Babylonish exiles under Zerubbabel with the consequent rebuilding of the temple, and the re-establishment of the divine service. The other part, embraced in the four concluding chapters, narrates the journey of a second caravan of returning captives under the conduct of Ezra himself, who was invested with powers to restore, in all its splendour, the entire system of the Jewish ritual. The general opinion of the Church in every succeeding age has been that Ezra was the author of this book. The chief objection is founded on ch. 5. 4, where the words "then said," etc., have occasioned a surmise that the first portion of the book was not written by Ezra, who did not go to Jerusalem for many years after. But a little attention will show the futility of this objection, as the words in question did not refer to the writer, but were used by Tatnai and his associates. The style and unity of object in the book clearly prove it to have been the production of but one author. The canonical authority of this book is well established; but another under the name of Ezra is rejected as apocryphal.

NEHEMIAH appears to have been the author of this book, from his usually writing in his own name, and indeed except in those parts which are unmistakably later editions or borrowed from public documents, he usually employs the first person. The major portion of the book is occupied with a history of Nehemiah's twelve years' administration in Jerusalem, after which he returned to his duties in Shushan. At a later period he returned with new powers, and commenced new and vigorous measures of reform, which are detailed in the latter chapters of the book.

ESTHER derives its name from the Jewish lady, who, having become wife of the king of Persia, employed her royal influence to effect a memorable deliverance for the persecuted Church of God. Various opinions are embraced and supported as to the authorship of this book, some ascribing it to Ezra, to Nehemiah, and to Mordecai. The preponderance of authorities is in favor of the last. The historical character of the book is undoubted, since, besides many internal evidences, its authenticity is proved by the strong testimony of the feast of Purim, the celebration of which can be traced up to the events which are described in this book. Its claim, however, to canonical authority has been questioned on the ground that the name of God does not once occur in it. But the uniform tradition both of the Jewish and the Christian Churches supports this claim, which nothing in the book tends to shake; while it is a record of the superintending care of divine providence over his chosen people, with which it is of the utmost importance the Church should be furnished. The name of God is strangely enough omitted, but the presence of God is felt throughout the history; and the whole tone and tendency of the book is so decidedly subservient to the honor of God and the cause of true religion that it has been generally received by the Church in all ages into the sacred canon.

## INTRODUCTION.

# A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

# POETRY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

HEBREW poetry is unique in its kind; in essence, the most sublime; in form, marked by a simplicity and ease which flow from its sublimity. "*The Spirit of the Lord spake by the Hebrew poet, and His word was upon his tongue*" (2 Samuel 23. 2). Even the music was put under the charge of spiritually gifted men; and one of the chief musicians, Heman, is called "the king's seer in the words of God" (1 Chronicles 25. 1, 5). King David is stated to have *invented instruments of music* (Amos 6. 5). There is not in Hebrew poetry the artistic rhythm of form which appears in the classical poetry of Greece and Rome, but it amply makes up for this by its fresh and graceful naturalness.

Early specimens of Hebrew poetry occur, *ex. gr.*, Lamech's sceptical parody of Enoch's prophecy, or, as others think, lamentation for a homicide committed in those lawless times in self-defense (Genesis 4. 23; cf. Jude 14; Exodus 32. 18; Numbers 21. 14, 15, 17, 18, 27; 23. 7, 8, 18; 24. 3, 15). The poetical element appears much more in the Old than in the New Testament. The poetical *books* are exclusively those of the Old Testament; and in the Old Testament itself, the portions that are the most fundamental (*ex. gr.*, the Pentateuch of Moses, the lawgiver, in its main body) are those which have in them least of the poetical element in form. Elijah, the father of the prophets, is quite free of poetical art. The succeeding prophets were not strictly poets, except in so far as the ecstatic state in inspiration lifted them in poetic modes of thought and expression. The prophet was more of an inspired teacher than a poet. It is when the sacred writer acts as the representative of the *personal experiences* of the children of God and of the Church, that poetry finds its proper sphere.

The use of poetry in Scripture was particularly to supply the want not provided for by the law, *viz.*, of *devotional forms* to express in private, and in public joint worship, *the feelings* of pious Israelites. The schools of the prophets fostered and diffused a religious spirit among the people; and we find them using lyric instruments to accompany their prophesings (1 Samuel 10. 5). David, however, it was who specially matured the lyric effusions of devotion into a perfection which they had not before attained.

Another purpose which Psalmody, through David's inspired productions, served, was to *draw forth from under the typical forms of legal services their hidden essence and spirit, adapting them to the various spiritual exigencies of individual and congregational life*. Nature, too, is in them shown to speak the glory and goodness of the invisible, yet ever present God. A handbook of devotion was furnished to the Israelite whereby he could enter into the true spirit of the services of the sanctuary, and so feel the need of that coming Messiah, of whom especially the book of Psalms testifies throughout. We also, in our Christian dispensation, need its help in our devotions. Obligated as we are, notwithstanding our higher privileges in most respects, to walk by faith rather than by sight in a greater degree than they, we find the Psalms, with their realizing expression of the felt nearness of God, the best repertory whence to draw *divinely-sanctioned language*, wherewith to express our prayers and thanksgivings to God, and our breathings after holy communion with our fellow-saints.

As to the objection raised against the spirit of revenge which breathes in some psalms, the answer is, a wide distinction is to be drawn between personal vindictiveness, and the desire for God's honor being vindicated. Personal revenge, not only in the other parts of Scripture, but also in the Psalms, in theory and in practice, is alike reprobated (Exodus 23. 4, 5; Leviticus 19. 18; Job 31. 29, 30; Psalm 7. 4, 5, 8, 11, 12; Proverbs 25. 21, 22), which corresponds to David's practice in the case of his unrelenting enemy (1 Samuel 24. 5, 6; 26. 8-10). On the other hand, the people of God have always desired that, whatever mars the cause of God, as for instance the prosperity of the enemies of God and His

## INTRODUCTION.

Church, should be brought to an end (Psalm 10. 12 ; 30. 27 ; 40. 16 ; 79. 6, 10). It is well for us, too, in our dispensation of love, to be reminded by these psalms of the danger of lax views as to God's hatred of sin ; and of the need there is, we should altogether enter into the mind of God on such points, at the same time that we seek to convert all men to God (cf. 1 Samuel 16, 1 ; Psalm 139. 21 ; Isaiah 66. 24 ; Revelation 14. 10).

Some psalms are composed of twenty-two parallel sentences or strophes of verses, beginning with words of which the initial letters correspond with the Hebrew letters (twenty-two) in their order (cf. Psalm 37. and 119). So Lamentations. This arrangement was designed as a help to the memory, and is only found in such compositions as handle not a distinct and progressive subject, but a series of pious reflections, in the case of which the precise order was of less moment. The Psalmist in adopting it does not slavishly follow it ; but, as in the 25th Psalm, deviates from it, so as to make the form, when needful, bend to the sense. Of these poems there are twelve in all the Hebrew Bible (Psalm 25., 34., 37., 111., 112., 119., 145. ; Proverbs 31. 10-31 ; Lamentations 1., 2., 3., 4.).

The great excellence of the Hebrew principle of versification, *viz.*, parallelism, or "thought rhythm" [Ewald], is that, while the poetry of every other language, whose versification depends on the regular recurrences of certain sounds, suffers considerably by translation, Hebrew poetry, whose rhythm depends on the parallel correspondence of similar *thoughts*, loses almost nothing in being translated—the Holy Spirit having thus presciently provided for its ultimate translation into every language, without loss to the sense. Thus our *English Version*, Job and Psalms, though but translations, are eminently poetical. On parallelism, see my *Introduction to Job*. Thus also a clue is given to the *meaning* in many passages, the sense of the word in one clause being more fully set forth by the corresponding word in the succeeding parallel clause. In the Masoretic punctuation of the Hebrew, the metrical arrangement is marked by the distinctive accents. It accords with the divine inspiration of Scripture poetry, that the *thought* is more prominent than the form, the kernel than the shell. The Hebrew poetic rhythm resembled our blank verse, without, however, metrical *feet*. There is a *verbal rhythm* above that of prose ; but as the true Hebrew pronunciation is lost, the rhythm is but imperfectly recognized,

The peculiarity of the Hebrew poetical age is, that it was *always historic and true, not mythical*, as the early poetical ages of all other nations. Again, its poetry is distinguished from prose by the use of *terms decidedly poetic*. David's lament over Jonathan, furnishes a beautiful specimen of another feature found in Hebrew poetry, *the strophe*: three strophes being marked by the recurrence three times of the dirge sung by the chorus ; the first dirge sung by the whole body of singers, representing Israel ; the second, by a chorus of damsels ; the third, by a chorus of youths (2 Samuel 1. 17-27.)

The lyrical poetry, which is the predominant style in the Bible, and is especially terse and sententious, seems to have come from an earlier kind resembling the more modern book of *Proverbs* (cf. Genesis 4. 23, 24). The Oriental mind tends to embody thought in pithy *gnomes*, *maxims*, and *proverbs*. "The poetry of the Easterns is a string of pearls. Every word has life. Every proposition is condensed wisdom. Every thought is striking and epigrammatical." [Kitto, *Biblical Cyclopædia*.] We are led to the same inference from the term *Maschal*, "a proverb" or "similitude," being used to designate *poetry in general*. "Hebrew poetry, in its origin, was a painting to the eye, a parable or teaching by likenesses discovered by the popular mind, expressed by the popular tongue, and adopted and polished by the national poet." Solomon, under inspiration, may have embodied in his *Proverbs* such of the pre-existing popular wise sayings as were sanctioned by the Spirit of God.

The Hebrew title for the Psalms, *Tehilim*, means *hymns, i. e., joyous praises* (sometimes accompanied with dancing, Exodus 15. ; Judges 5.), not exactly answering to the LXX. title, *Psalms, i. e., lyrical odes*, or songs accompanied by an instrument. The title *Tehilim*, "hymns," was probably adopted on account of *the use made of the Psalms in divine service*, though only a part can be strictly called songs of praise, others being *dirges*, and very many *prayers* (whence in Psalm 72. 20, David styles all his previous compositions, "the *prayers of David*"). Sixty-five bear the title, *lyrical odes*, (*Mizmorim*), whilst only one is styled *Tehilah* or *Hymn*. From the title being *Psalms* in the LXX. and New Testament, and also the Peshito, it is probable that *Psalms (Mizmorim) or lyrical odes*, was the old title before *Tehilim*.

*Epic* poetry, as having its proper sphere in a *mythical heroic age*, has no place among the Hebrews of the Old Testament Scripture age. For in their

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earliest ages, *viz.*, the patriarchal, *not fable* as in Greece, Rome, Egypt, and all heathen nations, but *truth* and *historic reality* reigned; so much so, that the poetic element, which is the offspring of the imagination, is less found in those earlier, than in the later ages. The Pentateuch is almost throughout historic prose. In the subsequent uninspired age, in Tobit we have some approach to the Epos.

*Drama*, also, in the full modern sense, is not found in Hebrew literature. This was due, not to any want of intellectual culture, as is fully shown by the high excellence of their lyric and didactic poetry, but to their earnest character, and to the solemnity of the subjects of their literature. The dramatic element appears in Job, more than in any other book in the Bible; there are the *dramatis personæ*, a plot, and the "denouement" prepared for by Elihu, the fourth friend's speech, and brought about by the interposition of Jehovah Himself. Still it is not a strict drama, but rather an inspired debate on a difficult problem of the divine government exemplified in Job's case, with historic narrative, prologue, and epilogue. The Song of Solomon, too, has much of the dramatic cast. See my *Introductions* to Job and Song of Solomon. The *Style* of many psalms is very dramatic, transitions often occurring from one to another person, without introduction, and especially from speaking indirectly of God to addresses to God; thus in Psalm 32. 1, 2, David makes a general introduction, "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven," etc.; then at v. 3-7, he passes to addressing God directly; then in v. 8, without preface, God is introduced, directly speaking, in answer to the previous prayer; then v. 10, 11, again he resumes indirect speaking of God, and addresses himself in conclusion to the righteous. These quick changes of person do not startle us, but give us a stronger sense of his habitual converse with God, than any assertions could do. Cf. also in Psalm 132. 8, 10, the prayer, "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed," with God's direct answer, which follows in almost the words of the prayer, "The Lord hath sworn unto David, etc. This is my rest for ever (v. 14). I will clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." Thus also in Psalm 2., various personages are introduced, dramatically acting and speaking—the confederate nations, Jehovah, the Messiah, and the Psalmist.

A frequent feature is, the *alternate succession of parts*, adapting the several psalms to alternate recitation by two *semi-choruses* in the temple worship, followed by a *full chorus* between the parts or at the end. So Psalm 107. 15, 21, 31. *De Burgh*, in his valuable commentary on the Psalms, remarks, "Our cathedral service exemplifies the form of chanting the Psalms, except that the *semi-chorus* is alternately a *whole verse*, instead of alternating, as of old, the *half verse*; while the *full chorus* is the 'gloria' at the end of each Psalm."

In conclusion, besides its unique point of excellence, its divine inspiration, Hebrew poetry is characterized as being essentially national, yet eminently catholic, speaking to the heart and spiritual sensibilities of universal humanity. Simple and unconstrained, it is distinguished by a natural freshness which is the result of its genuine truthfulness. The Hebrew poet sought not self, or his own fame, as all heathen poets, but was inspired by the Spirit of God to meet a pressing want which his own and his nation's spiritual aspirations after God made to be at once a necessity and a delight. Cf. 2 Samuel 23. 1, 2, "The sweet Psalmist of Israel said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me," etc.

*Ewald* rightly remarks, "as several odes of the highest poetic excellence are not included (*ex. gr.*, the songs of Moses, Exodus 15. and 32.: of Deborah, Judges 5; of Hannah, 1 Samuel 2. 1. 10; of Hezekiah, Isaiah 38. 9-20; of Habakkuk, Habakkuk 3.; and even David's dirge over Saul and Jonathan, 2 Samuel 1. 17, 18), the selection of the Psalms collected in one book was made not so much with reference to the beauty of the pieces, as to their adaptation for public worship. Still one overruling Spirit ordered the selection and arrangement of the contents of the book, as one pervading tone and subject appear throughout, Christ in His own inner life as the God-man, and in His past, present, and future relations to the Church and the world." *Isaac Taylor* well calls the Psalms "The Liturgy of the spiritual life;" and *Luther*, "A Bible in miniature."

The *principle of the order* in which the Psalms are given to us, though not always discoverable, is in some cases clear, and shows the arrangement to be unmistakably the work of the Spirit, not merely that of the collector. Thus Psalm 22. plainly portrays the dying agonies of Messiah; Psalm 23. His peaceful rest in Paradise after His death on the cross; and Psalm 24., His glorious ascension into heaven.

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

**THE** second division of Scripture, the others being the Law and Hagiographa. It included Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2d Samuel, 1st and 2d Kings, called the former prophets; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc., to Malachi, the latter prophets. Daniel is excluded, because, though highly endowed with prophetic gifts, he had not filled the prophetic office: his Book is therefore classed with the Hagiographa. Ezra probably commenced, and others subsequently completed, the arrangement of the canon. The prophets were not mere predictors. Their Hebrew name, *Nabi*, comes from a root to boil up as a fountain [*Gesenius*]; hence the fervor of inspiration, 2 Peter 1. 21 (others interpret it as from an Arabic root, Exodus 4. 16, spokesman of God, the Holy Ghost supplying him with words); communicated by dreams, Joel, 2 28; Job 33. 14-17 (no instance of this occurs in Isaiah); or visions, the scene being made to pass before their mind (Isaiah 1. 1); or trance, ecstacy (Numbers 24. 4, 16; Ezekiel 1. 3; 3. 14); not depriving them, however, of free conscious agency (Jeremiah 20. 7, 9; 1 Corinthians 14. 32).

These PECULIAR FORMS of inspiration distinguished prophets, strictly so called, from Moses and others though inspired (Numbers 12. 6-8). Hence their name *seers*. Hence, too, the poetical cast of their style, though less restricted, owing to their practical tendency, by the outward forms observed in strictly poetical books. Hence, too, the union of music with prophesying (1 Samuel 10, 5). This ecstatic state, though exalted, is not the highest; for Jesus Christ was never in it, nor Moses. It was rendered necessary by the frailty of the prophets, and the spiritual obtuseness of the people. It accordingly predominates in the Old Testament, but is subordinate in the New Testament, where the Holy Ghost by the fulness of His ordinary gifts renders the extraordinary less necessary. After the time of the Mosaic economy, the idea of a prophet was regularly connected with prophetic office,—not conferred by men, but by God. In this they differ from mystics whose pretended inspiration is for themselves; prophetism is practical, not dreamy and secluded; the prophets' inspiration is theirs only as God's messenger to the people. His ordinary servants and regular teachers of the people were the priests; the prophets, distinguished from them by inspiration, were designed to rouse and excite. In Israel, however, as distinguished from Judah, as there was no true priesthood, the prophets were the regular and only ministers of God. Prophecy in Israel needed to be supported more powerfully; therefore the "schools" were more established; and more striking prophetic deeds (*e. g.*, Elijah's and Elisha's) are recorded, than in Judah. The law was their basis (Isaiah 8. 16, 20), both its form and spirit (Deuteronomy 4. 2; 13. 1-3): at times they looked forward to a day when its ever-living spirit would break its then imperfect form for a freer and more perfect development (Jeremiah 3. 16; 31. 31): but they altered not a title in their own days. *Eichorn* well calls Moses' song (Deuteronomy 32.) the Magna Charta of prophesy. The fulfillment of their predictions was to be the sign of their being real prophets of God (Deuteronomy 18. 22). Also, their speaking in the name of no other but the true God (Deuteronomy 18. 20). Prophecy was the only sanctioned indulgence of the craving after knowledge of future events, which is so prevalent in the East (Deuteronomy 18. 10, 11). For a momentary inspiration the mere beginning of spiritual life sufficed, as in Balaam's case; but for a continuous mission, the prophet must be converted (Isaiah 6. 7). In Samuel's days (1 Samuel 10. 8; 19, 20) begin the prophetic "schools." These were associations of men, more or less endowed with the Spirit, in which the feeble were helped by those of greater spiritual powers: so at Beth-el and Gilgal (2 Kings 2. 3; 4. 38; 6. 21). Only the leaders stood in immediate communion with God, whilst the rest were joined to Him through their mediation (1 Kings 19. 15; 2 Kings 8. 13); the former acted through the latter as their instruments (1 Kings 19. 16; 2 Kings 9. 1, 2). The bestowal of prophetic gifts was not, however, limited to these schools. (Amos 7. 14, 15).

As to SYMBOLIC ACTIONS, many of them are not actual but only parts of the prophetic visions, internal not external facts, being impossible or indecent (Jere-

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emiah 13. 1-10 ; 25. 12-38 ; Hosea 1. 2-11). Still the internal actions, when possible and proper, were often expressed externally (1 Kings 22. 11). Those purely internal express the subject more strikingly than a naked statement could.

Other CRITERIA of a true prophet, besides the two above, were, *the accordance of his addresses with the law* ; his *not promising prosperity without repentance* ; his *own assurance of his divine mission* (sometimes received reluctantly, Jeremiah 20. 8, 9, Jeremiah 26. 12, *producing that inward assurance of the truth in others*, which is to them a stronger proof from the Spirit of God, than even outward miracles and arguments ; his pious life, fortitude in suffering, and freedom from fanaticism, confirm these criteria. Miracles, though proofs, are not to be trusted without the negative criteria (Deuteronomy 13. 2). Predictions fulfilled in the prophet's lifetime established his authority thenceforth (1 Samuel 3. 19 ; Jeremiah 22. 11, 12, Ezekiel 12. 12, 13 ; 24).

As to their PROMULGATION, it was usually oral, before the assembled people, and afterwards revised in writing. The second part of Isaiah, and Ezekiel 40-48., were probably not given orally, but in writing. Before Isaiah's and his contemporaries' time, prophecies were not *written*, as not being intended for universal use. But now a larger field was opened. To the worldly power of heathen nations which threatened to destroy the theocracy is henceforth opposed the kingdom of God, about to conquer all through Messiah, whose coming concerns all ages. The lesser prophets give the quintessence of the prophecies of their respective authors. An instance of the mode of collecting and publishing prophecies occurs, Jeremiah 36. 4-14. Those of the later prophets rest on those of the earlier (Zechariah 1. 4 ; 7, 7, 12). *Ewald* fancies that a great number of prophetic rolls have been lost. But the fact of the prophets often alluding to writings which we have, and never to those which it can be *proved* we have not, makes it likely that we have all those predictions which were committed to writing ; the care bestowed on them as divine, and the exact knowledge of them long after (Jeremiah 26. 18, 19), confirm this view.

The ARRANGEMENT is chronological ; but as the twelve lesser prophets are regarded as one work, and the three last of them lived later than Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the former are put after the latter. The lesser prophets are arranged chronologically, except Hosea, who being the largest, is placed first, though some were earlier than he : also Jonah, who seems to have been the earliest of *the latter prophets*.

As to THE MESSIAH, no *single* prophet gives a complete view of Him ; this is made up of the various aspects of Him in different prophecies combined ; just as His life in the gospels is one under a fourfold aspect. In the first part of Isaiah, addressed to the whole people, the prominent idea is His triumph, as King, the design being there to remove their fears of the surrounding nations ; in the second, addressed to the elect remnant, He is exhibited as prophet and Priest, **Himself being the sacrifice.**

## INTRODUCTION.

# PREFACE

TO THE

# PROPHETS OF THE RESTORATION.

THE prophetic *gift* existed long before the prophetic *office* was instituted. Thus Enoch had the former (Jude 14); so Abraham is called "a prophet" (Genesis 20. 7); also the patriarchs (Psalm 105. 15). The office was first instituted under the Mosaic economy; but even then the *gift* was not always connected with the office; *e. g.*, Daniel was endowed largely with the gift, but was never called to the office, as living in a heathen court where he could not have exercised it. So David (Matthew 13. 35; 27. 35). Hence the writings of both are classed with the Hagiographa, not with the prophets. Moreover, though the office ceased with the close of the Old Testament dispensation, the gift continued, and was among the leading charisms of the New Testament church. *Prophet* (in Hebrew from a root, "to gush out like a fountain") meant one acting as spokesman for another (Exodus 7. 1); so, one speaking authoritatively for God as *interpreter* of His will. *Seer* was the more ancient term (1 Samuel 9. 9) implying that he spake by a divine communication *presented either to his senses or his mind*: as "prophet" indicated his *authority* as speaking for God.

Christ was the only fountain of prophecy, (1 Peter 1. 11; Revelation 19. 10; also Acts 16. 7, the oldest reading, "the Spirit of *Jesus*"), and declared God's will to men by His Holy Spirit acting on the minds of the prophets. Thus the history of the Church is the history of God's revelations of Himself in His Son to man. The three divisions of this history, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations, are characterized each by a distinct mode of God's manifestations—*i. e.*, by a distinct form of the prophetic gift. The *theophanic* mode characterizes the Patriarchal dispensation: God revealing Himself in *visible appearances* or *theophanies*. The *theopneustic* mode, the Mosaic: God revealing Himself through *God-inspired men*. The *theologic* mode, the Christian: God revealing Himself, not merely at intervals as before, but permanently by *inspired writings*) "the oracles of God," 1 Peter 4. 11).

In the *first* or patriarchal age, men work no miracles, unlike all other primeval histories, which abound in miracles wrought by men; a proof of genuineness. All the miracles are wrought by God without man's intervention; and the divine communications are usually by direct utterance, whence the prophetic gift is rare, as God in this dispensation only exceptionally employs the prophetic agency of men in it; only in Genesis 20. 7, is the term "prophet" found. In the *second* or Mosaic dispensation, God withdraws Himself more from direct communication with man, and manifests Himself through human instruments. Instead of working miracles *directly*, Moses, Joshua, etc., are His agents. So in His Communications He speaks not directly, but through Moses and his successors. The theocracy needed a new form of prophetic gift: *God-inspired (theopneustic) men* must speak and act for God, the Head of the theocracy, as His administrators; the prophetic *gift* is therefore now connected with the prophetic *office*. These prophets accordingly are *acting*, not *writing*, prophets. The latter do not arise till the later ages of this second dispensation. Moses *acted* as a legislator; Joshua, the Judges and Samuel as executive prophets; David and Solomon as *devotional* prophets. Even in the case of the writing prophets of the latter half of the Mosaic dispensation, their *primary* duty was to speak and act. Their writing had reference more to the use of the New Testament dispensation than to their own (1 Peter 1. 12). So that even in their case the characteristic of the Mosaic dispensation was *theopneustic*, rather than *theologic*. The *third*, or Christian dispensation, is *theologic, i. e.*, a revelation of God by inspired *writings*: 1 Peter 4. 11; 2 Peter 1. 16-21, where he contrasts "the old time" when "holy men spake by the Holy Ghost" with our time when we have the "sure word of prophecy;" or, as it may be translated, "the word of prophecy confirmed (to us)." Thus God now reveals His will, not by direct *theophanies*, as in the first dispensation—not by *inspired men*, as in the second, but by the written *word* which *liveth* and *abideth* for ever (as opposed to the desultory manifestations of God, and the non-

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continuance in life of the prophets, under the two former dispensations respectively, 1 Peter 1. 23; 2 Peter 3. 2, 16). The next form shall be the return of the theophanic manifestations on earth, in a more perfect and abiding form than in the first age (Revelation 21. 3).

The history of the prophetic office under the Mosaic dispensation falls into three divisions. The first ends with the age of Samuel, and has no regular succession of prophets, these not being needed whilst *God Himself* ruled the people without an hereditary executive. The second period extends from Samuel to Uzziah, 800 B. C., and is the age of prophets of action. Samuel combined in himself the three elements of the theocracy, being a judge, a priest, and a prophet. The creation of a human king rendered the formal office of prophet more necessary as a counterpoise to it. Hence the age of the kings is the age of the prophets. But at this stage they were prophets of action, rather than of writing. Towards the close of this second period, the devotional and Messianic prophecies of David and Solomon prepared the way for the third period (from 800 B. C. to 100 B. C.), which began under Uzziah, and which was the age of written prophecy. In this third period the prophets turn from the present to the future, and so the Messianic element grows more distinct. Thus in these three shorter periods the grand characteristics of the three great dispensations re-appear. The first is *theophanic*; the second, *theopneustic*; and the third, *theologic*. Just as the great organic laws of the world re-appear in smaller departments, the law of the tree developing itself in miniature form in the structure of the leaf, and the curve of the planet's orbit re-appearing in the line traced by the projected cannon-ball. [Moore.]

Samuel probably enacted rules giving a permanent form to the prophetic order; at least in his time the first mention occurs of "schools of the prophets." These were all near each other, and in Benjamin, *viz.*, Bethel, Gilgal, Ramah and Jericho. Had the prophet been a mere foreteller of events, such schools would have been useless. But he was also God's representative to insure the due execution of the Mosaic ritual in its purity; hence arose the need of schools wherein to study that divinely ordained institution. God mostly chose his prophets from those thus educated, though not exclusively, as the cases of Amos (Amos 7. 14) and Elisha (1 Kings 19. 19) prove. The fact that the humblest might be called to the prophetic office acted as a check to the hereditary kingly power, and a stimulus to seeking the qualifications needed for so exalted an office. The Messianic Psalms towards the close of this second period form the transition between the prophets of *action* and the prophets of *word*, the men who were busy only with the present, and the men who looked out from the present into the glorious future.

The third period, that from Uzziah to Malachi, includes three classes of prophets: (1.) Those of the ten tribes; (2.) Those of the Gentiles; (3.) Those of Judah. In the first class were Hosea and Amos. Few of the *writing* prophets belonged to Israel. They naturally gathered about the seat of the theocracy in Judah. Hence those of the ten tribes were mostly prophets of action. Under the second class fall Jonah, Nahum, and Obadiah, who were witnesses for God's authority over the Gentile world, as others witnessed for the same in the theocracy. The third class, those of Judah, have a wider scope and a more hopeful, joyous tone. They fall into five divisions: (1.) *Those dwelling in Judah at the highest point of its greatness* during its separate state, *viz.*, the century between Uzziah and Hezekiah, 800-700 B. C., Isaiah, Joel, and Micah. (2.) *The declining period of Judah, from Manasseh to Zedekiah, e. g., Zephaniah and Habakkuk.* (3.) *The captivity:* Jeremiah. (4.) *The exile, when the future was all that the eye could rest on with hope, e. g., Ezekiel and Daniel, who are chiefly prophets of the future.* (5.) *The restoration:* to which period belong the three last writing prophets of the Old Testament, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. John the Baptist long subsequently belonged to the same dispensation, but he wrote nothing (Matthew 11. 9-11); like Elijah, he was a prophet of action and preaching, preparing the way for the prophets of *word*, as John did for the Incarnate Word.

To understand the spirit of each prophet's teaching, his historical position and the circumstances of the time must be considered. The captivity was designed to eradicate the Jews' tendency to idolatry, and to restore the theocratic spirit which recognized God as the only ruler, and the Mosaic institutions as His established law, for a time until Messiah should come. Hence the prophets of the restoration are best illustrated by comparison with the histories of Ezra and Nehemiah, contemporaries of Malachi.

Of the three prophets of the restoration, two, Haggai and Zechariah, are at the beginning of the period, and the remaining one, Malachi, is at the close. The exile was not one complete deportation of the people, but a series of deportations extending over a century and a half. So the restoration was not accom-



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plished at once, but in successive returns extending over a century. Hence arises the different tone of Haggai and Zechariah at its beginning, and of Malachi at its close. The first return took place in the first year of Cyrus, B. C. 536; 42,360 persons returned under Sheshbazzar or Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 2. 64). They built an altar and laid the foundations of the temple. They were interrupted by the misrepresentations of the Samaritans, and the work was suspended for fourteen years. The death of Smerdis gave an opportunity of renewing the work, seventy years after the destruction of the first temple. This was the time when Haggai and Zechariah arose, the former to incite to the immediate rebuilding of the temple and restoration of the Mosaic ritual, the latter to aid in the work, and to unfold the grand future of the theocracy as an incentive to present labor. The impossibility of observing the Mosaic ritual in the exile generated an anti-theocratic indifference to it in the young who were strangers to the Jerusalem worship, from which the nation had been upwards of half a century debarred. Moreover, the gorgeous pomp of Babylon tended to make them undervalue the humble rites of Jehovah's worship at that time. Hence there was need of a Haggai and a Zechariah to correct these feelings by unfolding the true glory of the theoretic institutions.

The next great epoch was the return of Ezra, B. C. 458, eighty years after the first expedition under Zerubbabel. Thirteen years later, 445 B. C., Nehemiah came to aid Ezra in the good work. It was now that Malachi arose to second these works, three-fourths of a century after Haggai and Zechariah. As their work was that of *restorers*, his was that of a *reformer*. The estates of many had become mortgaged, and depression of circumstances had led many into a sceptical spirit as to the service of God. They not only neglected the temple of worship, but took heathen wives, to the wrong of their Jewish wives and the dishonor of God. Therefore, besides the reformation of *civil* abuses, and the rebuilding of the wall, effected through Nehemiah's exertions, a *religious* reformer was needed such as was Ezra, who reformed the ecclesiastical abuses, established synagogues, where regular instruction in the law could be received; restored the Sabbath, and the Passover, and the dignity of the priesthood, and generated a reverence for the written law, which afterwards became a superstition. Malachi aided in this good work by giving it his prophetic authority. How thoroughly the work was effected is proved by the utter change in the national character. Once always prone to idolatry, ever since the captivity they have abhorred it. Once loving kingly rule, now contrary to the ordinary course of history, they became submissive to priestly rule. Once negligent of the written Word, now they regard it with reverence sometimes bordering on superstition. Once fond of foreign alliances, henceforth they shrank with abhorrence from all foreigners. Once fond of agriculture, now they became a trading people. From being pliable before, they now became intensely bigoted, and nationally intolerant. Thus the restoration from Babylon moulded the national character more than any event since the Exodus from Egypt.

Now the distinction between Judah and the ten tribes of Israel disappears. So in the New Testament the *twelve* tribes are mentioned (Acts 26. 7; James 1. 1). The theocratic feeling generated at the restoration drew all of the elect nation round the seat of the theocracy, the metropolis of the true religion, Jerusalem. Malachi tended to promote this feeling; thus his prophecy, though addressed to the people of Jerusalem, is called "the word of the Lord to *Israel*."

The long silence of prophets from Malachi to the times of Messiah was calculated to awaken in the Jewish mind the more earnest desire for Him who was to exceed infinitely in word and deed all the prophets, His forerunners. The three prophets of the restoration being the last of the Old Testament, are especially distinct in pointing to Him who, as the great subject of the New Testament, was to fulfil all the Old Testament.



# GENESIS.

## CHAPTER I.

**1, 2. THE CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. 1. in the beginning**—a period of remote and unknown antiquity, hid in the depths of eternal ages; and so the phrase is used in Proverbs, 8. 22, 23, also *Marginal Reference*. **God**—the name of the Supreme Being, signifying, in *Hebrew*, “Strong,” “Mighty.” It is expressive of omnipotent power; and, by its use here in the *plural* form, is obscurely taught at the opening of the Bible, a doctrine clearly revealed in other parts of it, *viz.*, that though God is one, there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son and Spirit, who were engaged in the creative work (Proverbs, 8. 27; John, 1. 3, 10; Ephesians, 3. 9; Hebrews, 1. 2; Job, 26. 13). **created**—not formed from any pre-existing materials but made out of nothing. **the heaven and the earth**—the universe. This first verse is a general introduction to the inspired volume, declaring the great and important truth, that all things had a beginning; that nothing, throughout the wide extent of nature, existed from eternity, originated by chance, or from the skill of any inferior agent; but that the whole universe was produced by the creative power of God (Acts, 17. 24; Romans, 11. 36). After this preface, the narrative is confined to the earth. **2. the earth was without form and void**—or in “confusion and emptiness” as the words are rendered in Isaiah, 34. 11. This globe, at some undescribed period, having been convulsed and broken up, was a dark and watery waste for ages perhaps, till out of this chaotic state the present fabric of the world was made to arise. **the Spirit of God moved**—*lit.*, continued brooding over it as a fowl does when hatching eggs. The immediate agency of the Spirit, by working on the dead and discordant elements, combined, arranged and ripened them into a state adapted for being the scene of a new creation. The account of this new creation properly begins at the end of this second verse; and the details of the process are described in the natural way an onlooker would have done who beheld the changes that successively took place.

**3-5. THE FIRST DAY. 3. God said**—This phrase, which occurs so repeatedly in the account, means, willed, decreed, appointed; and the determining will of God was followed in every instance by an immediate result. Whether the sun was created at the same time with, or long before, the earth, the dense accumulation of fogs and vapours which enveloped the chaos had covered the globe with a settled gloom. But, by the command of God, light was rendered visible; the thick, murky clouds were dispersed, broken or rarified, and light diffused over the expanse of waters. The effect is described in the name DAY, which, in *Hebrew*, signifies *warmth, heat*; while the name Night signifies a ROLLING UP, as night wraps all things in a shady mantle. **4. divided the light**

from darkness — refers to the alteration or succession of the one to the other, produced by the daily revolution of the earth round its axis. 5. **first day** — a natural day, as the mention of its two parts clearly determines ; and Moses reckons, according to Oriental usage, from sunset to sunset, saying not day and night as we do, but evening and morning.

6-8. SECOND DAY. 6. **firmament** — an expanse, a beating out as a plate of metal ; a name given to the atmosphere from its appearing to an observer to be the *vault* of heaven, supporting the weight of the *watery clouds*. By the creation of an atmosphere, the lighter parts of the waters which overspread the earth's surface were drawn up and suspended in the visible heavens, while the larger and heavier mass remained below. The air was thus "in the midst of the waters," *i. e.*, separated them ; and this being the apparent use of it, is the only one mentioned, although the atmosphere serves other uses as a medium of life and light.

9-13. THIRD DAY. 9. **let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place** — The world was to be rendered a terraqueous globe, and this was effected by a volcanic convulsion on its surface, the upheaving of some parts, the sinking of others, and the formation of vast hollows into which the waters impetuously rushed as is graphically described. (Psalm 104. 6-9). [HITCHCOCK.] Thus a large part of the earth was left "dry land," and thus were formed oceans, seas, lakes and rivers, which, though each having their own beds or channels, are all connected with the sea (Job, 38. 10 ; Ecclesiastes, 1. 7.) 11. **let the earth bring forth** — The bare soil was clothed with verdure and it is noticeable that the trees, plants and grasses, the three great divisions of the vegetable kingdom here mentioned, were not called into existence in the same way as the light and the air, they were made to grow, and they grew as they do still out of the ground, not, however, by the slow process of vegetation but through the Divine power, without rain, dew or any process of labour, sprouting up and flourishing in a single day.

14-19. FOURTH DAY. 14. **let there be lights in the firmament** — The atmosphere being completely purified, the sun, moon and stars were, for the first time, unveiled in all their glory in the cloudless sky ; and they are described as "in the firmament," which, to the eye, they appear to be, though we know they are really at vast distances from it. 16. **two great lights** — In consequence of the day being reckoned as commencing at even, the moon, which would be seen first in the horizon, would appear "a great light" compared with the little twinkling stars ; while its pale, benign radiance would be eclipsed by the dazzling splendour of the sun ; when his resplendent orb rose in the morning and gradually attained its meridian blaze of glory, it would appear "the greater light" that ruled the day. Both these lights may be said to be "made" on the fourth day, not created, indeed, for it is a different word that is here used, but constituted, appointed to the important and necessary office of serving as luminaries to the world, and regulating by their motions and their influence the progress and divisions of time,

**20-23. FIFTH DAY.** The signs of animal life appeared in the waters and in the air. **20. moving creature**—all oviparous animals, both among the finny and the feathery tribes, remarkable for their rapid and prodigious increase. **fowl**—means every flying thing. The word rendered “whales,” includes also sharks, crocodiles, &c. ; so that from the countless shoals of small fish to the great sea monsters, from the tiny insect to the king of birds, the waters and the air were made suddenly to swarm with creatures formed to live and sport in their respective elements.

**24-31. SIXTH DAY.** A farther advance was made by the creation of terrestrial animals, all the various species of which are included in three classes, *viz.*, cattle, the herbivorous kind capable of labour or domestication. **24. beasts of the earth**—*i. e.*, wild animals, whose ravenous natures were then kept in check and all the various forms of creeping things, from the huge reptiles to the insignificant caterpillars. **26.** The last stage in the progress of creation being now reached, **God said, Let us make man**—words which show the peculiar importance of the work to be done, the formation of a creature who was to be God’s representative, clothed with authority and rule as visible head and monarch of the world. **In our image, after our likeness**—This was a peculiar distinction, the value attached to which appears in the words being twice mentioned. And in what did this image of God consist? not in the erect form or features of man, not in his intellect; for the devil and his angels are, in this respect, far superior; not in his immortality; for he has not like God a past as well as a future eternity of being; but in the moral dispositions of his soul, commonly called *original righteousness* (Ecclesiastes, 7. 29). As the new creation is only a restoration of this image, the history of the one throws light on the other; and we are informed that it is renewed after the image of God in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness (Colossians, 3. 10; Ephesians, 4. 24). **28. Be fruitful, &c.**—The human race, in every country and age, have been the offspring of the first pair. Amid all the varieties found amongst men, some black as negroes, others copper-coloured as well as white, the researches of modern science lead to a conclusion, fully accordant with the sacred history, that they are all of one species and of one family (Acts, 17. 26). What power in the word of God! “He spake and it was done. He commanded and all things stood fast.” “Great and manifold are thy works, Lord God Almighty! in wisdom hast thou made them all.” We admire that wisdom, not only in the regular progress of creation but in its perfect adaptation to the end. God is represented as pausing at every stage to look at His work. No wonder he contemplated it with complacency. Every object was in its right place, every vegetable process going on in its season, every animal in its structure and instincts suited to its mode of life and its use in the economy of the world. He saw every thing that He had made answering the plan which His eternal wisdom had conceived; and, **31, “BEHOLD IT WAS VERY GOOD.”**

## CHAPTER II.

1. THE NARRATIVE OF THE SIX DAYS' CREATION CONTINUED. The course of the narrative being improperly broken by the division of the chapter. 1. **the heavens** — the firmament or atmosphere. **host** — a multitude, a numerous array — usually connected in Scripture with heaven only, but here with the earth also, meaning all that they contain. **were finished** — brought to completion — no permanent change has ever since been made on the course of the world, no new species of animals been formed, no law of nature repealed or added to. They could have been finished in a moment as well as in six days, but the work of creation was gradual for the instruction of man, as well, perhaps, as of higher creatures (Job, 38. 7).

2-7. THE FIRST SABBATH. 2. **and he rested on the seventh day** — not to repose from exhaustion with labour (see Isaiah, 40. 28), but ceasing from working, an example equivalent to a command, that we also should cease from labour of every kind. 3. **blessed and sanctified the seventh day** — a peculiar distinction put upon it above the other six days, and showing it was devoted to sacred purposes. The institution of the Sabbath is as old as creation, giving rise to that weekly division of time which prevailed in the earliest ages. It is a wise and beneficent law, affording that regular interval of rest which the physical nature of man and the animals employed in his service requires, and the neglect of which brings both to premature decay. Moreover, it secures an appointed season for religious worship, and if it was necessary in a state of primeval innocence, how much more so now, when mankind have a strong tendency to forget God and His claims? 4. **these are the generations of the heavens and the earth** — the history or account of their production. Whence did Moses obtain this account so different from the puerile and absurd fictions of the heathen? Not from any human source: for man was not in existence to witness it — not from the light of nature or reason; for though they proclaim the eternal power and Godhead by the things which are made, they cannot tell *how* they were made. None but the Creator himself could give this information, and, therefore, it is through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God (Hebrews, II. 3). **rain, mist** — See ch. I. 12. 7. Here the sacred writer applies a few more particulars about the first pair. **formed** — had FORMED MAN OUT OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND. Science has proved that the substance of his flesh, sinews and bones consist of the very same elements as the soil which forms the crust of the earth, and the limestone that lies embedded in its bowels. But from that mean material what an admirable structure has been reared in the human body (Psalm 139. 14). **breath of life** — *lit.*, of lives — not only animal but spiritual life. If the body is so admirable, how much more the soul with all its varied faculties. **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life** — not that the Creator literally performed this act, but respiration being the medium and sign of life, this phrase is used to show that man's

life originated in a different way from his body — being implanted directly by God (Ecclesiastes, 12. 7), and hence in the new creation of the soul Christ breathed on His disciples (John, 20. 22).

**8-17. THE GARDEN OF EDEN.** 8. **Eden** — was probably a very extensive region in Mesopotamia, it is thought, distinguished for its natural beauty and the richness and variety of its produce. Hence its name, signifying *pleasantness*. God planted a garden eastward — an extensive park — a paradise, in which the man was put to be trained under the paternal care of his Maker to piety and usefulness. **tree of life** — so called from its symbolic character as a sign and seal of immortal life. Its prominent position “in the midst of the garden,” where it must have been an object of daily observation and interest, was admirably fitted to keep them habitually in mind of God and futurity. 9. **tree of the knowledge of good and evil** — so called because it was a *test* of obedience by which our first parents were to be tried, whether they would be good or bad, obey God or break His commands. 17. **thou shalt not eat of it . . . thou shalt surely die** — no reason assigned for the prohibition, but death was to be the punishment of disobedience. A positive command like this was not only the simplest and easiest, but the only trial to which their fidelity could be exposed. 15. **put the man into the garden of Eden to dress it** — not only to give him a pleasant employment, but to place him on his probation, and as the title of this garden, the garden of the Lord (ch. 13. 10; Ezekiel, 28. 13), indicates — it was in fact a temple in which he worshipped God, and was daily employed in offering the sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise.

**18-25. THE MAKING OF WOMAN, AND INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE** 18. **it is not good for man to be alone** — In the midst of plenty and delights, he was conscious of feelings he could not gratify. To make him sensible of his wants. 19. **God brought unto Adam** — not all the animals in existence, but those chiefly in his immediate neighbourhood, and to be subservient to his use. **whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof** — His powers of perception and intelligence were supernaturally enlarged to know the characters, habits and uses of each species that was brought to him. 20. **but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him** — The design of this singular scene was to show him that none of the living creatures he saw were on an equal footing with himself, and that while each class came with its mate of the same nature, form and habits, he alone had no companion. Besides, in giving names to them he was led to exercise his powers of speech, and prepare for social intercourse with his partner, a creature yet to be formed. 21. **deep sleep** — probably an ecstasy or trance like that of the prophets, when they had visions and revelations of the Lord, for the whole scene was probably visible to the mental eye of Adam, and hence his rapturous exclamation. **took one of his ribs** — “She was not made out of his head to surpass him, nor from his feet to be trampled on, but from his side to be equal to him, and near his heart to be dear to him.” 23. **Woman** — *i. e.*, in *Hebrew* — man-Ess. **one flesh** — the human pair differed from all other pairs, that by the peculiar formation of Eve,

they were one. And this passage is appealed to by our Lord as the Divine institution of marriage (Matthew, 19. 4, 5 ; Ephesians, 5. 28). Thus Adam appears as a creature formed after the image of God — showing his *knowledge* by giving names to the animals, his *righteousness* by his approval of the marriage relation, and his *holiness* by his principles and feelings — finding their gratification in the service and enjoyment of God.

### CHAPTER III.

**1-5. THE TEMPTATION. 1. the serpent**—The fall of man was effected by the seductions of a serpent. That it was a real serpent is evident from the plain and artless style of the history ; and from the many allusions made to it in the New Testament. But the material serpent was the instrument or tool of a higher agent, Satan or the Devil, to whom the sacred writers apply from this incident the reproachful name of “the Serpent,” “the old Dragon.” Though Moses makes no mention of this wicked Spirit, giving only the history of the visible world, yet, in the fuller discoveries of the Gospel, it is distinctly intimated that Satan was the author of the plot (John, 8. 44 ; 2 Corinthians, 11. 3 ; 1 John, 3. 8 ; 1 Timothy, 2. 14 ; Revelation, 20. 2). **more subtle**—Serpents are proverbial for wisdom (Matthew, 10. 16). But these reptiles were at first, probably, far superior in beauty as well as in sagacity to what they are in their present state. **He said**—There being in the pure bosoms of the first pair no principle of evil to work upon, a solicitation to sin could come only from *without*, as in the analogous case of Jesus Christ (Matthew, 4. 3) ; and as the tempter could not assume the human form, there being only Adam and Eve in the world, the agency of an inferior creature had to be employed. The Dragon-serpent [BOCHART] seemed the fittest for the vile purpose ; and the Devil was allowed by Him, who permitted the trial, to bring articulate sounds from its mouth. **unto the woman**—the object of attack, from his knowledge of her frailty, of her having been but a short time in the world, her limited experience of the animal tribes, and, above all, her being alone, unfortified by the presence and counsels of her husband. Though sinless and holy, she was a free agent, liable to be tempted and seduced. **yea, hath God said**—Is it true that he hath restricted you in using the fruits of this delightful place ? This is not like one so good and kind. Surely there is some mistake. He insinuated a doubt as to her sense of the Divine will, and appeared as “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians, 11. 14) offering to lead her to the true interpretation. It was, evidently, from her regarding him as specially sent on that errand, that, instead of being startled by the reptile’s speaking, she received him as a heavenly messenger. **2. the woman said, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden**—In her answer Eve extolled the large extent of liberty they enjoyed in ranging at will amongst all the trees, one only excepted, with respect to which she declared there was no doubt, either of the prohibition or the penalty. But there is reason to



think that she had already received an injurious impression; for, in using the words, "lest ye die," instead of "ye shall surely die," she spoke as if the tree had been forbidden from some poisonous quality of its fruit. The tempter, perceiving this, became bolder in his assertions. 4. **Ye shall not surely die**—he proceeded not only to assure her of perfect impunity but to promise great benefits from partaking of it. 5. **your eyes shall be opened**—his words meant more than met the ear. In one sense their eyes were opened; for they acquired a direful experience of "good and evil," of the happiness of a holy and the misery of a sinful condition. But he studiously concealed this result from Eve, who, fired with a generous desire for knowledge, thought only of rising to the rank and privileges of her angelic visitants.

6-9. **THE FALL.** 6. **And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food**—Her imagination and feelings were completely won; and the fall of Eve was soon followed by that of Adam. The history of every temptation and of every sin is the same; the outward object of attraction—the inward commotion of mind—the increase and triumph of passionate desire; ending in the degradation, slavery and ruin of the soul (James, I. 15; I John, 2. 10). 8. **they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden**—The Divine Being appeared in the same manner as formerly—uttering the well-known tones of kindness, walking in some visible form—not running hastily, as one impelled by the influence of angry feelings. How beautifully expressive are these words of the familiar and condescending manner in which He had hitherto held intercourse with the first pair. **in the cool of the day**—*lit.*, the breeze of the day—the evening. **hid themselves amongst the trees**—Shame, remorse, fear—a sense of guilt—feelings to which they had hitherto been strangers, disordered their minds, and led them to shun Him whose approach they used to welcome. How foolish to think of eluding His notice (Psalm 139. 1-12).

10-13. **THE EXAMINATION.** 10. **afraid, because . . . naked**—apparently, a confession—the language of sorrow; but it was evasive—no signs of true humility and penitence—each tries to throw the blame on another. 12. **The woman . . . gave me**—He blames God. [CALVIN.] As the woman had been given him for his companion and help, he had eaten of the tree from love to her; and perceiving she was ruined, was determined not to survive her. [M'KNIGHT.] 13. **beguiled**—cajoled by flattering lies. This sin of the first pair was heinous and aggravated—it was not simply eating an apple, but a love of self, dishonour to God, ingratitude to a benefactor, disobedience to the best of Masters—a preference of the creature to the Creator.

14-24. **THE SENTENCE.** 14. **And the Lord God said unto the serpent**—The Judge pronounces a doom first—on the material serpent, which is cursed above all creatures; from being a model of grace and elegance in form—it has become the type of all that is odious, disgusting and low [LECLERC, ROSENMULLER]; or the curse has converted its natural condition into a punishment; it is now branded with infamy, and avoided with horror; next, on the

spiritual Serpent — the seducer. Already fallen, he was to be still more degraded, and his power wholly destroyed by the offspring of those he had deceived. 15. **thy seed** — not only evil spirits, but wicked men. **seed of the woman** — the Messiah, or His Church. [CALVIN, HENGSTENBERG.] **I will put enmity between thee and the woman** — God can only be said to do so by leaving “the Serpent and his seed to the influence of their own corruption; and by those measures which, pursued for the salvation of men, fill Satan and his angels with envy and rage.” **thou shalt bruise his heel** — The serpent wounds the heel that crushes him; and so Satan would be permitted to afflict the humanity of Christ, and bring suffering and persecution on His people. **it shall bruise thy head** — the serpent’s poison is lodged in its head; and a bruise on that part is fatal. Thus, fatal shall be the stroke which Satan shall receive from Christ; though it is probable, he did not first understand the nature and extent of his doom. 16. **unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow** — She was doomed as a wife and mother, to suffer pain of body and distress of mind. From being the help-meet of man and the partner of his affections, her condition would henceforth be that of humble subjection. 17-19. **unto Adam he said** — made to gain his livelihood by tilling the ground, but what before his fall he did with ease and pleasure, was not to be accomplished after it without painful and persevering exertion. **till thou return unto the ground** — man became mortal; although he did not die the moment he ate the forbidden fruit, his body underwent a change and that would lead to dissolution, the union subsisting between his soul and God having already been dissolved, he had become liable to all the miseries of this life and to the pains of hell for ever. What a mournful chapter this is in the history of man! It gives the only true account of the origin of all the physical and moral evils that are in the world, upholds the moral character of God; shows that man, made upright, fell from not being able to resist a slight temptation; and becoming guilty and miserable, plunged all his posterity into the same abyss (Romans, 5. 12). How astonishing the grace which at that moment gave promise of a Saviour; and conferred on her who had the disgrace of introducing sin, the future honour of introducing that Deliverer (1 Timothy, 2. 15). 20. **Adam called his wife’s name Eve** — probably in reference to her being a mother of the promised Saviour as well as of all mankind. 21. **God made coats of skins** — taught them to make these for themselves. This implies the institution of animal sacrifice which was, undoubtedly, of Divine appointment and instruction, in the only acceptable mode of worship for sinful creatures, through faith in a Redeemer (Hebrews, 9. 22). 22. **And God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us** — not spoken in irony as is generally supposed but in deep compassion. The words should be rendered, “Behold, what has become (by sin) of the man who was as one of us! formed at first in our image to know good and evil, how sad his condition now. **and now lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life** — This tree being a pledge of that immortal life with which obedience should be rewarded, he lost, on his fall, all claim

to this tree ; and, therefore, that he might not eat of it or delude himself with the idea that eating of it would restore what he had forfeited, the Lord sent him forth from the garden. 24. **placed . . . cherubim** — The passage should be rendered thus : “ And he dwelt between the cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a fierce fire or Shechinah unfolding itself to preserve the way of the tree of life.” This was the mode of worship now established to show God’s anger at sin and teach the mediation of a promised Saviour as the way of life as well as of access to God. They were the same figures as were afterward in the tabernacle and temple ; and now, as then, God said, “ I will commune with thee from between the cherubim ” (Exodus, 25. 22).

## CHAPTER IV.

**1-26. BIRTH OF CAIN AND ABEL. I. Eve said, I have gotten a man from the Lord** — *i. e.*, “ by the help of the Lord,” an expression of pious gratitude, and she called him Cain, *i. e.*, “ a possession ” as if valued above every thing else ; while the arrival of another son reminding her of the misery she had entailed on her offspring, led to the name Abel, *i. e.*, either weakness, vanity (Psalm 39. 5) or grief, lamentation. Cain and Abel were probably twins ; and it is thought that, at this early period, children were born in pairs (ch. 5. 4). [CALVIN.] **Abel was a keeper of sheep** — *lit.*, “ feeder of a flock,” which, in Oriental countries, always includes goats as well as sheep. Abel, though the younger, is mentioned first probably on account of the pre-eminence of his religious character. 3. **in process of time** — *Hebrew*, “ at the end of days ; ” probably on the Sabbath. **brought . . . an offering unto the Lord** — Both manifested by the very act of offering their faith in the being of God and in his claims to their reverence and worship ; and had the kind of offering been left to themselves, what more natural than that the one should bring “ of the fruits of the ground ; ” that the other should bring “ of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof.” 4. **the Lord had respect unto Abel not unto Cain, &c.** — The words, “ had respect to,” signify, in *Hebrew*, to look at any thing with a keen, earnest glance ; which has been translated, “ kindle into a fire,” so that the Divine approval of Abel’s offering was shown in its being consumed by fire (see ch. 15. 17 ; Judges, 13. 20). 7. **If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted ?** — In the *Margin* it is, “ Shalt thou not have the excellency ? ” which is the true sense of the words, referring to the high privileges and authority belonging to the first-born in patriarchal times. **sin lieth at the door** — sin, *i. e.*, a sin-offering, a common meaning of the word in Scripture, as in Hosea, 4. 8 ; 2 Corinthians, 5. 21 ; Hebrews, 9. 28. The purport of the Divine rebuke to Cain was this, “ Why art thou angry as if unjustly treated ? If thou doest well, *i. e.*, wert innocent and sinless, a thank-offering would have been accepted as a token of thy dependence as a creature. But as thou doest not well, *i. e.*, art a sinner, a sin-offering is necessary, by bringing which thou wouldst have met with

acceptance and retained the honours of thy birth-right." This language implies that previous instructions had been given as to the mode of worship; Abel offered through faith (Hebrews, II. 4). **unto thee shall be his desire** — The high distinction conferred by priority of birth is described (ch. 27. 29); and it was Cain's conviction that this honour had been withdrawn from him by the rejection of his sacrifice and conferred on his younger brother, hence the secret flame of jealousy which kindled into a settled hatred and fell revenge. 8. **And Cain talked with Abel his brother** — Under the guise of brotherly familiarity he concealed his premeditated purpose till a convenient time and place occurred for the murder (1 John, 3. 12; 9. 10). 10. **the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me** — Cain, to lull suspicion, had, probably, been engaging in the solemnities of religion where he was challenged directly from the Shechinah itself. 9. **I know not** — a falsehood. One sin leads to another. 11, 12. **now art thou cursed from the earth** — A curse superadded to the general one denounced on the ground for Adam's sin. **a fugitive** — condemned to perpetual exile, a degraded outcast, the miserable victim of an accusing conscience. 13, 14. **And Cain said . . . my punishment is greater than I can bear** — What an overwhelming sense of misery; but no sign of penitence nor cry for pardon. **every one that findeth me shall slay me** — This shows that the population of the world was now considerably increased. 15. **whosoever slayeth Cain** — By a special act of Divine forbearance the *life* of Cain was to be spared in the then small state of the human race. **set a mark** — not any visible mark or brand on his forehead but some *sign* or *token* of assurance that his life would be preserved. This sign is thought by the best writers to have been a wild ferocity of aspect that rendered him an object of universal horror and avoidance. 16. **presence of the Lord** — the appointed place of worship at Eden. Leaving it he not only severed himself from his relatives but forsook the ordinances of religion, probably casting off all fear of God from his eyes, so that the last end of this man is worse than the first (Matthew, 12. 45). **land of Nod** — of flight or exile, thought by many to have been Arabia Petraea, which was cursed to sterility on his account. 17-22. **builded a city** — It has been in cities that the human race has ever made the greatest social progress; and several of Cain's descendants distinguished themselves by their inventive genius in the arts. 19. **Lamech took unto him two wives** — This is the first transgression of the law of marriage on record, and the practice of polygamy, like all other breaches of God's institutions, has been a fruitful source of corruption and misery. 23, 24. **Lamech said unto his wives** — This speech is in a poetical form, probably the fragment of an old poem, transmitted to the time of Moses. It seems to indicate that Lamech had slain a man in self-defense, and its drift is to assure his wives, by the preservation of Cain, that an UNINTENTIONAL homicide, as he only was, could be in no danger. 26. **men began to call upon the name of the Lord** — rather, by the name of the Lord. God's people, a name probably applied to them in contempt by the world.

## CHAPTER V.

**1-32. GENEALOGY OF THE PATRIARCHS. I. book of the generations**— See ch. II. 4. **Adam**— used here either as the name of the first man or of the human race generally. 5. **all the days . . . Adam lived**— The most striking feature in this catalogue is the longevity of Adam and his immediate descendants. Ten are enumerated in direct succession whose lives far exceed the ordinary limits with which we are familiar, the shortest being 365 and the longest 930. It is useless to inquire whether and what secondary causes may have contributed to this protracted longevity, vigorous constitutions, the nature of their diet, the temperature and salubrity of the climate; or, finally, as this list comprises only the true worshippers of God, whether their great age might be owing to the better government of their passions and the quiet even tenor of their lives. Since we cannot obtain satisfactory evidence on these points it is wise to resolve the fact into the sovereign will of God. We can, however, trace some of the important uses to which, in the early economy of Providence, it was subservient. It was the chief means of preserving a knowledge of God, of the great truths of religion, as well as the influence of genuine piety. So that, as their knowledge was obtained by tradition, they would be in a condition to preserve it in the greatest purity. 24. **And Enoch walked with God**— A common phrase in Eastern countries denoting constant and familiar intercourse. **was not; for God took him**— In Hebrews, II. 5, we are informed that he was translated to heaven, a mighty miracle, designed to effect what ordinary means of instruction had failed to accomplish, gave a palpable proof to an age of almost universal unbelief that the doctrines which he had taught (Jude, 14. 15) were true, and that his devotedness to the cause of God and righteousness in the midst of opposition was highly pleasing to the mind of God. 21. **Enoch . . . begat Methuselah**— This name signifies, “He dieth, and the sending forth,” so that Enoch gave it as prophetic of the flood. It is computed that Methuselah died in the year of that catastrophe. 26. **Lamech**— a different person from the one mentioned in preceding chapter. Like his namesake, however, he also spoke in numbers on occasion of the birth of Noah, *i. e.*, “rest” or “comfort.” “The allusion is, undoubtedly, to the penal consequences of the fall in earthly toils and sufferings, and to the hope of a Deliverer, excited by the promise made to Eve. That this expectation was founded on a Divine communication we infer from the importance attached to it and the confidence of its expression.” [PETER SMITH.] 32. **Noah was five hundred years old; and . . . begat**— That he and the other patriarchs were advanced in life ere children were born to them is a difficulty accounted for probably from the circumstance that Moses does not here record their first-born sons but only the succession from Adam through Seth to Abraham.

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-22. WICKEDNESS OF THE WORLD.** 2. **the sons of God saw the daughters of men**—By the former is meant the family of Seth, who were professedly religious; by the latter, the descendants of apostate Cain. Mixed marriages between parties of opposite principles and practice were necessarily sources of extensive corruption. The women, irreligious themselves, would, as wives and mothers, exert an influence fatal to the existence of religion in their household, and consequently the people of that later age sank to the lowest depravity. 3. **flesh**—utterly, hopelessly debased. **And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive**—Christ, as God, had by His Spirit inspiring Enoch, Noah and perhaps other prophets (1 Peter, 3. 20; 2 Peter, 2. 5; Jude, 14), preached repentance to the antediluvians; but they were incorrigible. **yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years**—It is probable that the corruption of the world, which had now reached its height, had been long and *gradually* increasing, and this idea receives support from the long respite granted. 4. **giants**—The term in *Hebrew* implies not so much the idea of great stature as of reckless ferocity, impious and daring characters, who spread devastation and carnage far and wide. 5, 6. **God saw it, repented . . . grieved**—God cannot change (Malachi, 3. 6; James, 1. 17); but, by language *sui-ting to our nature and experience*, He is described as about to alter His visible procedure toward mankind—from being merciful and long-suffering, He was about to show Himself a God of judgment; and, as that impious race had filled up the measure of their iniquities, He was about to introduce a terrible display of His justice (Ecclesiastes, 8. 11). 8. **But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord**—favour. What an awful state of things when only one man or one family of piety and virtue was now existing among the professed sons of God! 9. **Noah . . . just . . . and perfect**—not absolutely; for since the fall of Adam no man has been free from sin except Jesus Christ. But as living by faith he was just (Galatians, 3. 2; Hebrews, 11. 7) and perfect—*i. e.*, sincere in his desire to do God's will. 11. **the earth was filled with violence**—In the absence of any well-regulated government it is easy to imagine what evils would arise. Men did what was right in their own eyes, and, having no fear of God, destruction and misery were in their ways. 13. **And God said unto Noah**—How startling must have been the announcement of the threatened destruction! There was no outward indication of it. The course of nature and experience seemed against the probability of its occurrence. The public opinion of mankind would ridicule it. The whole world would be ranged against him. Yet, persuaded the communication was from God, through faith (Hebrews, 11. 7), he set about preparing the means for preserving himself and family from the impending calamity. 14. **Make thee an ark**—ark, a hollow chest (Exodus, 2. 3). **gopher wood**—probably cypress, remarkable for its durability, and abounding on the Armenian mountains. **rooms**—cabins or small cells. **pitch**

**it within and without**—mineral pitch, asphalt, naphtha, or some bituminous substance, which, when smeared over and become hardened, would make it perfectly water-tight. 15. **And this is the fashion**—According to the description, the ark was not a ship, but an immense house in form and structure, like the houses in the East, designed not to sail, but only float. Assuming the cubit to be 21.888 inches, the ark would be 547 feet long, 91 feet 2 inches wide, and 47 feet 2 inches high—that is, three times the length of a first-rate man-of-war in the British navy. 16. **A window**—probably a skylight, formed of some transparent substance unknown. **in a cubit shalt thou finish it above**—a direction to raise the roof in the middle, seemingly to form a gentle slope for letting the water run off. 17-22. **And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood**—The repetition of the announcement was to establish its certainty (ch. 41. 32). Whatever opinion may be entertained as to the operation of natural laws and agencies in the deluge, it was brought on the world by God as a punishment for the enormous wickedness of its inhabitants. 18. **But with thee will I establish my covenant**—a special promise of deliverance, called a covenant, to convince him of the confidence to be reposed in it. The substance and terms of this covenant are related between v. 19 and 21. 22. **Thus did Noah**—He began without delay to prepare the colossal fabric, and in every step of his progress faithfully followed the Divine directions he had received.

## CHAPTER VII.

1-24. ENTRANCE INTO THE ARK. 1. **And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark**—The ark was finished; and he now, in the spirit of implicit faith which had influenced his whole conduct, waited for directions from God. 2, 3. **Of every clean beast . . . fowls**—pairs of every species of animals, except the tenants of the deep, were to be taken for the preservation of their respective kinds. This was the general rule of admission, only with regard to those animals which are styled “clean,” three pairs were to be taken whether of beasts or birds; and the reason was that their rapid multiplication was a matter of the highest importance when the earth should be renovated from their utility, either as articles of food or as employed in the service of man. But what was the use of the seventh? It was manifestly reserved for sacrifice; and so that both during Noah’s residence in the ark and after his return to dry land, provision was made for celebrating the rites of worship according to the religion of fallen man. He did not, like many, leave religion behind. He provided for it during his protracted voyage. 4. **For yet seven days**—A week for a world to repent! What a solemn pause! Did they laugh and ridicule his folly still? He whose eyes saw, and whose heart felt the full amount of human iniquity and perverseness, has told us of their reckless disregard (Luke, 17. 27). 9. **There went in two and two**—Doubtless, they were led by a Divine impulse. The number would not be so large as at first

sight one is apt to imagine. It has been calculated that there are not more than three hundred distinct species of beasts and birds, the immense varieties in regard to form, size and colour, being traceable to the influence of climate and other circumstances. 16. **and the Lord shut him in**—*lit.*, “covered him round about.” The “shutting him in” intimated that he had become the special object of Divine care and protection, and that to those without the season of grace was over (Matthew, 25. 10). 17. **the waters increased and bare up the ark**—It seems to have been raised so gradually as, perhaps, to be scarcely perceptible to the inmates. 20. **Fifteen cubits upward . . . and the mountains were covered**—twenty-two and a half feet above the summits of the highest hills. The language is not consistent with the theory of a partial deluge. 21. **all flesh died . . . fowl . . . cattle and . . . creeping thing**—It has been a uniform principle in the Divine procedure, when judgments were abroad on the earth, to include every thing connected with the sinful objects of His wrath (ch. 19. 25; Exodus, 9. 6). Besides, now that the human race were reduced to one single family, it was necessary that the beasts should be proportionally diminished, otherwise by their numbers they would have acquired the ascendancy and overmastered the few that were to re-people the world. Thus goodness was mingled with severity; the Lord exercises judgment in wisdom, and in wrath remembers mercy. 24. **an hundred and fifty days**—a period of five months. Though long before that every living creature must have been drowned, such a lengthened continuance of the flood was designed to manifest God’s stern displeasure at sin and sinners. Think of Noah during such a crisis. We learn (Ezekiel, 14. 14) that he was a man who lived and breathed habitually in an atmosphere of devotion; and having in the exercise of this high-toned faith made God his refuge, he did not fear “though the waters roared and were troubled; though the mountains shook with the swelling thereof.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1-14. ASSUAGING OF THE WATERS. I. God remembered Noah**—The Divine purpose in this awful dispensation had been accomplished, and the world had undergone those changes necessary to fit it for becoming the residence of man under a new economy of providence. **every living thing . . . in the ark**—A beautiful illustration of Matthew, 10. 29. **and God made a wind to pass over the earth**—Though the Divine will could have dried up the liquid mass in an instant—the agency of a wind was employed (Psalm 104. 4)—probably a *hot* wind, which, by rapid evaporation, would again absorb one portion of the waters into the atmosphere; and by which, the other would be gradually drained off by outlets beneath. 4. **seventh month**—of the year—not of the flood—which lasted only five months. **rested**—evidently indicating a calm and gentle motion. **upon the mountains of Ararat**—or Armenia, as the word is rendered (2 Kings, 19. 37; Isaiah, 37. 38). The mountain which traditions points to, as the one on which the ark rested,





Ararat.



is now called Ara Dagh—the finger mountain. Its summit consists of two peaks—the higher of which is 17,750 feet, and the other 13,420 above the level of the sea. 5. **And the waters decreased continually**—The decrease of the waters was for wise reasons exceedingly slow and gradual—the period of their return being nearly twice as long as that of their rise. 6. **at the end of forty days**—It is easy to imagine the ardent longing Noah and his family must have felt to enjoy again the sight of land as well as breathe the fresh air; and it was perfectly consistent with faith and patience to make inquiries, whether the earth was yet ready. 7. **And he sent forth a raven**—The smell of carrion would allure it to remain if the earth were in a habitable state. But it kept hovering about the spot, and, being a solitary bird, probably perched on the covering. 8-11. **Also he sent forth a dove**—A bird flying low and naturally disposed to return to the place of her abode. 10. **again he sent forth a dove**—Her flight, judging by the time she was abroad, was pursued to a great distance, and the newly plucked olive leaf, she no doubt, by supernatural impulse, brought in her bill, afforded a welcome proof that the declivities of the hills were clear. 12. **he . . . sent forth the dove: which returned not . . . any more**—In these results, we perceive a wisdom and prudence far superior to the inspiration of instinct—we discern the agency of God guiding all the movements of this bird for the instruction of Noah, and reviving the hopes of his household. **other seven days**—A strong presumptive proof that Noah observed the Sabbath during his residence in the ark. 13. 14. **Noah removed the covering of the Ark**—probably only as much of it as would afford him a prospect of the earth around. Yet for about two months he never stirred from his appointed abode till he had received the express permission of God. We should watch the leading of Providence to direct us in every step of the journey of life.

15-22. DEPARTURE FROM THE ARK. 15, 16. **And God spake . . . Go forth**—They went forth in the most orderly manner—the human inmates first—then each species “after their kinds,” *lit.*, according to their families, implying that there had been an increase in the ark. 20. **Noah builded an altar**—*lit.*, “a high place”—probably a mound of earth, on which a sacrifice was offered. There is something exceedingly beautiful and interesting to know that the first care of this devout patriarch was to return thanks for the signal instance of mercy and goodness which he and his family had experienced. **took of every clean beast, and . . . fowl**—For so unparalleled a deliverance, a special acknowledgment was due. 21. **The Lord smelled a sweet savour**—The sacrifice offered by a righteous man like Noah in faith, was acceptable as the most fragrant incense. **Lord said in his heart**—same as “I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth” (Isaiah, 54. 9). “for”—*i. e.*, “though the imagination is evil;” instead of inflicting another destructive flood, I shall spare them—to enjoy the blessings of grace, through a Saviour. 22. **While the earth remaineth**—The consummation as intimated in 2 Peter, 3. 7, does not frustrate a promise which held good only during the

continuance of that system. There will be no flood between this and that day, when the earth therein shall be burnt up. [CHALMERS.]

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-7. COVENANT.** 1. **And God blessed Noah**—Here is republished the law of nature that was announced to Adam, consisting as it originally did of several parts. **Be fruitful, &c.**—The first part relates to the transmission of life, the original blessing being re-announced in the very same words in which it had been promised at first. 2. **And the fear of you and the dread of you**—the second re-establishes man's dominion over the inferior animals; it was now founded not as at first in love and kindness, but in terror; this dread of man prevails among all the stronger as well as the weaker members of the animal tribes, and keeps away from his haunts all but those employed in his service. 3. **Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you**—the third part concerns the means of *sustaining* life: man was for the first time, it would seem, *allowed* the use of animal food, but the grant was accompanied with one restriction. 4. **But flesh . . . the blood . . . shall ye not eat**—The sole intention of this prohibition was to prevent these excesses of cannibal ferocity in eating flesh of living animals, to which men in the earlier ages of the world were liable. 5. **surely your blood of your lives will I require**—The fourth part establishes a new power for *protecting* life—the institution of the civil magistrate (Romans, 13. 4), armed with public and official authority to repress the commission of violence and crime. Such a power had not previously existed in patriarchal society. 6. **Whoso sheddeth man's blood . . . for in the image of God made he man**—It is true that image has been injured by the fall, but it is not lost. In this view, a high value is attached to the life of every man, even the poorest and humblest, and an awful criminality is involved in the destruction of it.

**8-29. RAINBOW.** 13. **I do set my bow in the cloud**—Set, *i. e.*, constitute or appoint. This common and familiar phenomenon being made the pledge of peace, its appearance when showers began to fall would be welcomed with the liveliest feelings of joy. 20. **And Noah . . . planted a vineyard**—Noah had been probably bred to the culture of the soil, and resumed that employment on leaving the ark. 21. **And he drank of the wine, and was drunken**—perhaps at the festivities of the vintage season. This solitary stain on the character of so eminently pious a man must, it is believed, have been the result of age or inadvertency. 24. This incident could scarcely have happened till twenty years after the flood; for Canaan, whose conduct was more offensive than that even of his father, was not born till after that event. It is probable that there is a long interval included between these verses, and that this prophecy, like that of Jacob on his sons, was not uttered till near the close of Noah's life, when the prophetic spirit came upon him; this presumption is strengthened by the mention of his death immediately after. 25. **Cursed be Canaan**—this doom

has been fulfilled in the destruction of the Canaanites—in the degradation of Egypt, and the slavery of the Africans, the descendants of Ham. 26. **Blessed be the Lord God of Shem**—rather, “Blessed of Jehovah, my God, be Shem”—an intimation that the descendants of Shem should be peculiarly honoured in the service of the true God—His church being for ages established amongst them (the Jews), and of them concerning the flesh Christ came. They got possession of Canaan, the people of that land being made their “servants” either by conquest, or, like the Gibeonites, by submission. 27. **God shall enlarge Japheth**—pointing to a vast increase in posterity and possessions. Accordingly his descendants have been the most active and enterprising, spread over the best and largest portion of the world, all Europe and a considerable part of Asia. **he shall dwell in the tents of Shem**—a prophecy being fulfilled at the present day, as in India British government is established, and the Anglo-Saxons being in the ascendant from Europe to India, from India over the American continent. What a wonderful prophecy in a few verses! Isaiah, 46. 10; 1 Peter, 1. 25.

## CHAPTER X.

**1-32. GENEALOGIES. I. sons of Noah**—The historian has not arranged this catalogue according to seniority of birth; for the account begins with the descendants of Japheth, and the line of Ham is given before that of Shem, though he is expressly said to be the youngest or younger son of Noah; and Shem was the elder brother of Japheth (*v.* 21), the true rendering of that passage. **generations, &c.**—the narrative of the settlement of nations existing in the time of Moses, perhaps only the principal ones: for though the list comprises the sons of Shem, Ham and Japheth, *all their descendants* are not enumerated. Those descendants, with one or two exceptions, are described by names indicative of tribes and nations, and ending in the Hebrew *im*, or the English *ite*. 5. **the isles of the Gentiles**—a phrase by which the Hebrews described all countries which were accessible by sea (Isaiah, 11. 11; 20. 6; Jeremiah, 25. 22). Such in relation to them were the countries of Europe, the peninsula of Lesser Asia, and the region lying on the east of the Euxine. Accordingly, it was in these quarters the early descendants of Japheth had their settlements. 6. **sons of Ham**—emigrated southward, and their settlements were—that of Cush in Arabia, of Canaan in the country known by his name, and Mizraim in Egypt Upper and Lower. It is generally thought that his father accompanied him, and personally superintended the formation of the settlement, whence Egypt was called “the land of Ham.” 8. **Nimrod**—mentioned as eclipsing all his family in renown. He early distinguished himself by his daring and successful prowess in hunting wild beasts. By those useful services he earned a title to public gratitude; and, having established a permanent ascendancy over the people, he founded the first kingdom in the world. 10. **the beginning of his kingdom**—This kingdom, of course, though then considered great, would be

comparatively limited in extent, and the towns but small forts.

11. **Out of that land went forth Asshur**—or, as the *Margin* has it, “He (Nimrod) at the head of his army went forth into Assyria,” *i. e.*, he pushed his conquests into that country. **and builded Nineveh**—opposite the town of Mosul, on the Tigris, and the other towns were near it. This raid into Assyria was an invasion of the territories of Shem, and hence the name “Nimrod,” signifying “rebel,” is supposed to have been conferred on him from his daring revolt against the Divine distribution.

21. **Unto Shem**—The historian introduces him with marked distinction as “the father of Eber,” the ancestor of the Hebrews.

23. **Aram**—In the general division of the earth, the countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia and Syria fell to his descendants.

24. **Arphaxad**—The settlement of his posterity was in the extensive valley of Shinar, on the Tigris, toward the southern extremity of Mesopotamia, including the country of Eden and the region on the east side of the river.

25. **Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided**—After the flood (ch. 11. 10-16) the descendants of Noah settled at pleasure, and enjoyed the produce of the undivided soil. But according to Divine instruction, made probably through Eber, who seems to have been distinguished for piety or a prophetic character, the earth was divided, and his son’s name, “Peleg,” was given in memory of that event. See Deuteronomy, 32. 8; Acts, 17. 26.

32. **These are the families of the sons of Noah after their generations, in their nations, &c.**—This division was made in the most orderly manner; and the inspired historian evidently intimates that the sons of Noah were ranged according to their nations, and every nation ranked by its families, so that every nation had its assigned territory, and in every nation the tribes, and in every tribe the families, were located by themselves.

## CHAPTER XI.

1-32. **CONFUSION OF TONGUES.** 1. **the whole earth was of one language**—The descendants of Noah, united by the strong bond of a common language, had not separated, and notwithstanding the Divine command to replenish the earth, were unwilling to separate. The more pious and well-disposed would, of course, obey the Divine will; but a numerous body—seemingly the aggressive horde mentioned (ch. 10. 10), determined to please themselves by occupying the fairest region they came to.

2. **land of Shinar**—the fertile valley watered by the Euphrates and Tigris was chosen as the centre of their union and the seat of their power.

3. **brick**—there being no stone in that quarter, brick is and was the only material used for building, as appears in the mass of ruins which at the Birs Nimroud may have been the very town formed by those ancient rebels. Some of these are sun-dried—others burnt in the kiln and of different colours.

**slime**—bitumen, a mineral pitch, which, when hardened, forms a strong cement, commonly used in Assyria to this day, and forming the mortar found on the burnt-brick remains of antiquity.

4. **a tower whose top may**

**reach unto heaven**—a common figurative expression for great height (Deuteronomy, 1. 28 ; 9. 1-6). 6. **now nothing will be restrained from them**—an apparent admission that the design was practicable, and would have been executed but for the Divine interposition. **lest we be scattered**—To build a city and a town was no crime ; but to do this, to defeat the counsels of heaven by attempting to prevent emigration, was foolish, wicked, and justly offensive to God. 7. **confound their language**—*lit.*, their lip ; it was a failure in utterance, occasioning a difference in dialect which was intelligible only to those of the same tribe. Thus easily by God their purpose was defeated, and they were compelled to the dispersion they had combined to prevent. It is only from the Scriptures we learn the true origin of the different nations and languages of the world. By one miracle of tongues men were dispersed, and gradually fell from true religion. By another, national barriers were broken down—that all men might be brought back to the family of God. 28. **Ur**—(now Orfa), *i. e.*, light, or fire. Its name probably derived from its being devoted to the rites of fire-worship. Terah and his family were equally infected with that idolatry as the rest of the inhabitants (Joshua, 24. 15). 31. **Sarai his daughter-in-law**—the same as Iscah, granddaughter of Terah, probably by a second wife, and by early usages considered marriageable to her uncle Abraham. **and they came unto Haran**—two days' journey south-south-east from Ur, in the direct road to the ford of the Euphrates at Rakka, the nearest and most convenient route to Palestine.

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## CHAPTER XII.

**1-20. CALL TO ABRAM.** 1. **Now the Lord had said unto Abram**—It pleased God, who has often been found of them who sought him not, to reveal himself to Abraham perhaps by a miracle ; and the conversion of Abraham is one of the most remarkable in Bible history. **Get thee out of thy country**—His being brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God had probably been a considerable time before. This call included two promises : The first, showing the land of his future posterity ; and the second, that in his posterity all the earth was to be blessed. Abraham obeyed, and it is frequently mentioned in the New Testament as a striking instance of his faith (Hebrews, 11. 8). 5. **into the land of Canaan . . . they came**—with his wife and an orphan nephew. Abram reached his destination in safety, and thus the first promise was made good. 6. **the place of Sichem**—or Shechem, a pastoral valley then unoccupied (Cf. ch. 33. 18). **plain of Moreh**—rather, the “ terebinth tree ” of Moreh, very common in Palestine, remarkable for its wide-spreading branches and its dark green foliage. It is probable that in Moreh there was a grove of these trees whose inviting shade led Abram to choose it for an encampment. 7. **Unto thy seed will I give this land**—God was dealing with Abram not in his private and personal capacity merely, but with a view to high and important interests in future ages. That land his pos-

terity was for centuries to inhabit as a peculiar people ; the seeds of Divine knowledge were to be sown there for the benefit of all mankind ; and, considered in its geographical situation, it was chosen in Divine wisdom the fittest of all lands to serve as the cradle of a Divine revelation designed for the whole world. **and there builded he an altar unto the Lord**—By this solemn act of devotion he made an open profession of his religion, established the worship of the true God and declared his faith in the promise. 10. **there was a famine . . . and Abram went down into Egypt**—did not go back to the place of his nativity, as regretting his pilgrimage and despising the promised land (Hebrews, 11. 15), but withdrew for a while into a neighbouring country. 11-13. Sarai's complexion, coming from a mountainous country, would be fresh and fair compared with the faces of Egyptian women which were sallow. The counsel of Abram to her was true in words, but it was a deception, intended to give an impression that she was no more than his sister. His conduct was culpable and inconsistent with his character as a servant of God ; it showed a reliance on worldly policy more than a trust in the promise ; and he not only sinned himself but tempted Sarai to sin also. 14. **when Abram was come into Egypt**—It appears from the monuments of that country that at the time of Abram's visit a monarchy had existed for several centuries. The seat of government was in the Delta, the most northern part of the country, the very quarter in which Abram must have arrived. They were a race of shepherd kings, in close alliance with the people of Canaan. 15. **the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house**—Eastern kings have for ages claimed the privilege of taking to their harem an unmarried woman whom they like. The father or brother may deplore the removal as a calamity, but the royal right is never resisted nor questioned. 16. **he entreated Abram well for her sake**—The presents are just what one pastoral chief would give to another. 18-20. Here is a most humiliating rebuke and Abram deserved it. Had not God interfered he might have been tempted to stay in Egypt and forget the promise (Psalm 105. 13, 15). Often still does God rebuke his people and remind them through enemies that this world is not their rest.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**1-18. RETURN FROM EGYPT. 1. went up . . . south**—Palestine being a highland country, the entrance from Egypt by its southern boundary is a continual ascent. 2. **very rich**—compared with the pastoral tribes to which Abraham belonged. An Arab sheik is considered rich who has a hundred or two hundred tents, from sixty to a hundred camels, a thousand sheep and goats respectively. And Abraham being very rich, must have far exceeded that amount of pastoral property. "Gold and Silver" being rare among these people, his probably arose from the sale of his produce in Egypt. 3. **went on his journeys**—his progress would be by slow marches and frequent encampments, as he had to regulate his movements by the prospect of water and pasturage. **unto the place . . . be-**



**tween Beth-el and Hai** — “a conspicuous hill — its topmost summit resting on the rocky slopes below, and distinguished by its olive groves — offering a natural base for the altar and a fitting shade for the tent of the patriarch.” [STANLEY.] 4. **there Abram called on the name of the Lord** — he felt a strong desire to re-animate his faith and piety on the scene of his former worship: it might be to express humility and penitence for his misconduct in Egypt, or thankfulness for deliverance from perils — to embrace the first opportunity on returning to Canaan of leading his family to renew allegiance to God, and offer the typical sacrifices which pointed to the blessings of the promise. 7. **And there was a strife** — Abraham’s character appears here in a most amiable light. Having a strong sense of religion, he was afraid of doing any thing that might tend to injure its character or bring discredit on its name, and he rightly judged that such unhappy effects would be produced if two persons whom nature and grace had so closely connected should come to a rupture. Waiving his right to dictate, he gave the freedom of choice to Lot. The conduct of Abraham was not only disinterested and peaceable; but generous and condescending in an extraordinary degree, exemplifying the Scripture precepts. Matthew, 6. 32; Romans, 12. 10, 11; Philippians, 2. 4. 10. **Lot lifted up his eyes** — Travelers describe that from the top of this hill, a little “to the east of Bethel,” they can see the Jordan, the broad meadows on either bank, and the waving line of verdure which marks the course of the stream. 11. **Then Lot chose him all the plain** — a choice excellent in a worldly point of view, but most inexpedient for his best interests. He seems, though a good man, to have been too much under the influence of a selfish and covetous spirit; and how many, alas! imperil the good of their souls for the prospect of worldly advantage. 14, 15. **Lift up now thine eyes . . . all the land which thou seest** — so extensive a survey of the country, *in all directions*, can be obtained from no other point in the neighbourhood; and those plains and hills, then lying desolate before the eyes of the solitary patriarch, were to be peopled with a mighty nation “like the dust of the earth in number,” as they were in Solomon’s time (1 Kings, 4. 20). 18. **plain of Mamre . . . built . . . an altar** — grove of Mamre — the renewal of the promise was acknowledged by Abram by a fresh tribute of devout gratitude.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**1-24. WAR. 1. And it came to pass** — This chapter presents Abram in the unexpected character of a warrior. The occasion was this: The king of Sodom and the kings of the adjoining cities, after having been tributaries for twelve years to the king of Elam, combined to throw off his yoke. To chastise their rebellion, as he deemed it, Chedorlaomer, with the aid of three allies, invaded the territories of the refractory princes, defeated them in a pitched battle, where the nature of the ground favoured his army (*v.* 10), and hastened in triumph on his homeward march with a large amount of captives and booty, though merely a stranger. 12. **they**

took Lot . . . and his goods and departed — How would the conscience of that young man now upbraid him for his selfish folly and ingratitude in withdrawing from his kind and pious relative! Whenever we go out of the path of duty we put ourselves away from God's protection and cannot expect that the choice we make will be for our lasting good. 13. **there came one that had escaped** — Abram might have excused himself from taking any active concern in his "brother," *i. e.*, nephew, who little deserved that he should incur trouble or danger on *his* account. But Abram, far from rendering evil for evil, resolved to take immediate measures for the rescue of Lot. 14. **And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive he armed his trained servants** — domestic slaves, such as are common in Eastern countries still and are considered and treated as members of the family. If Abram could spare three hundred and eighteen slaves and leave a sufficient number to take care of the flocks, what a large establishment he must have had. 15, 16. **he divided himself . . . by night** — This war between the petty princes of ancient Canaan is exactly the same as the frays and skirmishes between Arab chiefs in the present day. When a defeated party resolve to pursue the enemy they wait till they are fast asleep, then, as they have no idea of posting sentinels, they rush upon them from different directions, strike down the tent poles, if there is any fight at all, it is the fray of a tumultuous mob, a panic commonly ensues and the whole contest is ended with little or no loss on either side. 18. **Melchizedek** — This victory conferred a public benefit on that part of the country; and Abram, on his return, was treated with high respect and consideration, particularly by the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, who seems to have been one of the few native princes, if not the only one, who knew and worshipped "the Most High God," whom Abram served. This king, who was a type of the Saviour (Hebrews, 7. 1), came to bless God for the victory which had been won, and, in the name of God, to bless Abram, by whose arms it had been achieved, a pious acknowledgment which we should imitate on succeeding in any lawful enterprise. 20. **he gave him tithes of all** — Here is an evidence of Abram's piety as well as of his valour; for it was to a priest or official mediator between God and him, that Abram gave a tenth of the spoil, a token of his gratitude and in honour of a Divine ordinance (Proverbs, 3. 9). 21. **The king of Sodom said . . . Give me the persons** — According to the war customs still existing among the Arab tribes, Abram might have retained the recovered goods, and his right was acknowledged by the king of Sodom. But with honest pride and a generosity unknown in that part of the world, he replied with strong phraseology common to the East, "I have lifted up mine hand (*i. e.*, I have sworn unto the Lord), that I will not take from a thread even to a sandal-thong, that I will not take any thing that is thine lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich."

## CHAPTER XV.

**1-21. DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT. 1. After these things**—the conquest of the invading kings. **the word of the Lord**—a phrase used, when connected with a vision, to denote a prophetic message. **Fear not, Abram**—When the excitement of the enterprise was over he had become a prey to despondency and terror at the probable revenge that might be meditated against him. To dispel his fear, he was favoured with this gracious announcement. Having such a promise, how well did it become him, and all God's people who have the same promise, to dismiss their fears, and cast their burdens on the Lord (Psalm 27. 3). **2. Lord God, what wilt thou give?**—To his mind the declaration, "I am thy exceeding great reward," had but one meaning, or was viewed but in one particular light, as bearing on the fulfillment of the promise, and he was still experiencing the sickness of hope deferred. **Eliezer of Damascus . . . one born in my house is mine heir**—According to the usage of Nomadic tribes, his chief confidential servant would be heir to his possessions and honours. But this man could have become his son only by adoption; and how sadly would that have come short of the parental hopes he had been encouraged to entertain! His language betrayed a latent spirit of fretfulness, or perhaps a temporary failure in the very virtue for which he is so renowned—an absolute submission to God's time as well as way of accomplishing His promise. **4. This shall not be thine heir**—To the first part of his address no reply was given; but having renewed it in a spirit of more becoming submission, "whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it," he was delighted by a most explicit promise of Canaan, which was immediately confirmed by a remarkable ceremony. **9-12. Take me an heifer, &c.**—On occasion of great importance, when two or more parties join in a compact, they either observe precisely the same rites as Abram did, or, where they do not, they invoke the lamp as their witness. According to these ideas, which have been from time immemorial engraven on the minds of Eastern people, the Lord himself condescended to enter into covenant with Abram. The patriarch did not pass between the sacrifice, and the reason was that in this transaction he was bound to nothing. He asked a sign, and God was pleased to give him a sign, by which, according to Eastern ideas, he bound himself. In like manner God has entered into covenant with us; and in the glory of the Only Begotten Son, who passed through between God and us, all who believe have, like Abram, a sign or pledge in the gift of the Spirit, whereby they may know that they shall inherit the heavenly Canaan.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**1-16. BESTOWMENT OF HAGAR. 1. Now Sarai . . . had a handmaid**—a female slave, one of those obtained in Egypt. **3. Sarai . . . gave her to . . . Abram to be his wife**—wife is here used to

describe an inferior, though not degrading relation, in countries where polygamy prevails. In the case of these female slaves, which are the personal property of his lady, being purchased before her marriage or given as a special present to herself, no one can become the husband's secondary wife without her mistress' consent or permission. This usage seems to have prevailed in patriarchal times; and Hagar, the slave of Sarai, of whom she had the entire right of disposing, was given by her mistress' spontaneous offer to be the secondary wife of Abram, in the hope of obtaining the long-looked for heir. It was a wrong step, indicating a want of simple reliance on God, and Sarai was the first to reap the bitter fruits of her device. 5. **And Sarai said . . . My wrong be upon thee** — Bursts of temper or blows, as the original may bear, took place, till at length Hagar, perceiving the hopelessness of maintaining the unequal strife, resolved to escape from what had become to her in reality, as well as in name, a house of bondage. 7. **And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain** — This well, pointed out by tradition, lay on the side of the caravan road, in the midst of Shur, a sandy desert on the west of Arabia Petræa, to the extent of 150 miles, between Palestine and Egypt. By taking that direction she seems to have intended to return to her relatives in that country. Nothing but pride, passion and sullen obstinacy, could have driven any solitary person to brave the dangers of such an inhospitable wild; and she must have died had not the timely appearance and words of the angel recalled her to reflection and duty. 11. **Ishmael** — Like other Hebrew names this had a signification, and it is made up of two words, "God hears." The reason is explained. 12. **he will be a wild man** — *lit.*, a *wild ass man*, expressing how the wildness of Ishmael and his descendants resembles that of the wild ass. **his hand will be against every man** — descriptive of the rude, turbulent and plundering character of the Arabs. **dwelt in the presence of all his brethren** — dwell, *i. e.*, pitch tents; and the meaning is that they maintain their independence in spite of all attempts to extirpate or subdue them. 13. **called the name** — common in ancient times to name places from circumstances; and the name given to this well was a grateful recognition of God's gracious appearance in the hour of her distress.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**1-27. RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT.** 1. **Abram . . . ninety years old and nine** — Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael. During that interval he had enjoyed the comforts of communion with God, but had been favoured with no special revelation as formerly, probably on account of his hasty and blameable marriage with Hagar. **the Lord appeared** — some visible manifestation of the Divine presence, probably the shechinah or radiant glory of overpowering effulgence. **I am the Almighty God** — the name by which he made himself known to the patriarchs (Exodus, 6. 3), designed to convey the sense of "all-sufficient" (Psalm 16. 5, 6; 73. 25). **walk . . . and be . . . perfect** — upright, sincere (Psalm 51. 6) in

heart, speech and behaviour. 3. **Abram fell on his face**—the attitude of profoundest reverence assumed by Eastern people. It consists in the prostrate body resting on the hands and knees, with the face bent till the forehead touches the ground. It is an expression of conscious humility and profound reverence. 4. **my covenant is with thee**—renewed mention is made of it as the foundation of the communication that follows. It is the covenant of grace made with all who believe in the Saviour. 5. **but thy name shall be Abraham**—In Eastern countries a change of name is an advertisement of some new circumstance in the history, rank or religion of the individual who bears it. The change is made variously, by the old name being entirely dropped for the new, or by conjoining the new with the old, or sometimes only a few letters are inserted, so that the altered form may express the difference in the owner's state or prospects. It is surprising how soon a new name is known and its import spread through the country. In dealing with Abraham and Sarai, God was pleased to adopt His procedure to the ideas and customs of the country and age. Instead of Abram, "a high father," he was to be called Abraham, father of a multitude of nations (Revelation, 2. 17). 6-8. **I will give unto thee . . . the land**—It had been previously promised to Abraham and his posterity (ch. 15, 18). Here it is promised as an "everlasting possession," and was, therefore, a type of heaven, "the better country" (Hebrews, 11. 16). 10. **Every man-child among you shall be circumcised**—This was the sign in the Old Testament Church as baptism is in the New, and hence the covenant is called "covenant of circumcision" (Acts, 7. 8 ; Romans, 4. 11). The terms of the covenant were these—on the one hand Abraham and his seed were to observe the right of circumcision ; and on the other, God promised, in the event of such observance, to give them Canaan for a perpetual possession, to be a God to him and his posterity, and that in him and his seed all nations should be blessed. 15. 16. **As for Sarai . . . I will . . . give thee a son also of her**—God's purposes are gradually made known. A son had been long ago promised to Abraham. Now, at length, for the first time he is informed that it was to be a child of Sarai. 17. **Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed**—it was not the sneer of unbelief, but a smile of delight at the improbability of the event (Romans, 4. 20). 18. **O that Ishmael might live before thee**—natural solicitude of a parent. But God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts. 19. 20. The blessings of the covenant are reserved for Isaac, but common blessings were abundantly promised to Ishmael ; and though the visible Church did not descend from his family, yet personally he might, and it is to be hoped *did* enjoy its benefits.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1-8. ENTERTAINMENT OF ANGELS. 1. **the Lord appeared**—another manifestation of the Divine presence, more familiar than any yet narrated ; and more like that in the fullness of time, when the Word was made flesh. **plains of Mamre**—rather, terebinth or oak of Mamre—a tall spreading tree or grove of trees. **sat in**

**the tent door** — the tent itself being too close and sultry at noon, the shaded open front is usually resorted to for the air that may be stirring. 2. **lift up his eyes . . . and, lo, three men** — Travelers in that quarter start at sunrise and continue till mid-day, when they look out for some resting-place. **he ran to meet them** — When the visitor is an ordinary person, they merely rise; but if of superior rank, the custom is to advance a little toward the stranger, and after a very low bow, turn and lead him to the tent — putting an arm around his waist, or tapping him on the shoulder as they go, to assure him of welcome. 3. **My Lord, if now I have found favour** — The hospitalities offered are just of the kind that are necessary and most grateful, the refreshment of water for feet exposed to dust and heat by the sandals being still the first observed amongst the pastoral people of Hebron. 5. **for therefore are ye come** — No questions were asked. But Abraham knew their object by the course they took — approaching directly in *front* of the chief sheik's tent, which is always distinguishable from the rest, and thus showing their wish to be his guests. 6. **Abraham hastened . . . unto Sarah . . . make cakes upon the hearth** — Bread is baked daily, and no more than is required for family use, and always by the women, commonly the wife. It is a short process. Flour mixed with water is made into dough, and being rolled out into cakes, it is placed on the earthen floor, previously heated by a fire. The fire being removed, the cakes are laid on the ground, and being covered over with hot embers, are soon baked, and eaten the moment they are taken off. 7. **Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf** — Animal food is never provided except for visitors of a superior rank, when a kid or lamb is killed. A calf is still a higher stretch of hospitality, and it would probably be cooked as is usually done when haste is required — either by roasting it whole or by cutting it up into small pieces, and broiling them on skewers over the fire. It is always eaten along with boiled corn swimming in *butter* or melted fat, into which every morsel of meat, laid upon a piece of bread, is dipped, before being conveyed by the fingers to the mouth. 8. **milk** — a bowl of camel's milk ends the repast. **he stood by them under the tree** — The host himself, even though he has a number of servants, deems it a necessary act of politeness to *stand* while his guests are at their food, and Abraham evidently did this before he was aware of the real character of his visitors.

9-15. REPROOF OF SARAH. An inquiry about his wife, so surprising in strangers, the subject of conversation and the fulfillment of the fondly cherished promise within a specified time, showed Abraham that he had been entertaining more than ordinary travelers (Hebrews, 13. 2). 10. **Sarah heard it in the tent door which was behind him** — The women's apartment is in the back of the tent, divided by a thin partition from the men's. 12. **Therefore, Sarah laughed within herself** — long delay seems to have weakened faith. Sarah treated the announcement as incredible and when taxed with the silent sneer, she added falsehood to distrust. It was an aggravated offense (Acts, 5. 4.) and nothing but grace saved her (Romans, 9. 18)

**16-22. DISCLOSURE OF SODOM'S DOOM.** 16. **the men rose . . . Abraham went with them** — It is customary for a host to escort his guests a little way. 17. **the Lord said, Shall I hide** — the chief stranger, no other than the Lord, disclosed to Abraham the awful doom about to be inflicted on Sodom and the cities of the plain for their enormous wickedness. 21. **I will go down . . . and see** — language used after the manner of men. These cities were to be made ensamples to all future ages of God's severity; and, therefore, ample proof given that the judgment was neither rash nor excessive (Ezekiel, 18. 23; Jeremiah, 18. 7).

**23-33. ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION.** 23. **Abraham drew near and said, &c.** — The scene described is full of interest and instruction, showing in an unmistakable manner the efficacy of prayer and intercession. (See, also, Proverbs, 15. 8; James, 5. 16.) Abraham reasoned justly as to the rectitude of the Divine procedure (Romans, 3. 5, 6), and many guilty cities and nations have been spared on account of God's people (Matthew, 5. 13; 24. 22). 33. **the Lord . . . left communing . . . and Abraham returned unto his place** — Why did Abraham cease to carry his intercessions farther? Either because he fondly thought that he was now sure of the cities being preserved (Luke, 13. 9), or because the Lord restrained his mind from farther intercession (Jeremiah, 7. 16; 11. 14). But there were not ten "righteous persons." There was only one, and he might without injustice have perished in the general overthrow (Ecclesiastes, 9. 2). But a difference is sometimes made, and, on this occasion, the grace of God was manifested in a signal manner for the sake of Abraham. What a blessing to be connected with a saint of God!

## CHAPTER XIX.

**1-38. LOT'S ENTERTAINMENT.** 1. **there came two angels** — most probably two of those that had been with Abraham, commissioned to execute the Divine judgment against Sodom. **Lot sat in the gate of Sodom** — In Eastern cities it is the market, the seat of justice, of social intercourse and amusement, especially a favourite lounge in the evenings, the arched roof affording a pleasant shade. 2. **turn in, I pray you . . . tarry all night** — offer of the same generous hospitalities as described in the preceding chapter, and which are still spontaneously practiced in the small towns. **And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night** — Where there are no inns and no acquaintance, it is not uncommon for travelers to sleep in the street wrapped up in their cloaks. 3. **entered into his house** — On removing to the plain, Lot intended at first to live in his tent apart from the people. But he was gradually drawn in, dwelt in the city, and he and his family were connected with the citizens by marriage ties. 4. **men of Sodom, compassed the house** — Appalling proofs are here given of their wickedness. It is evident that evil communications had corrupted good manners, otherwise Lot would never have acted as he did. 12, 13. **Hast thou here any besides? . . . we will destroy this place** — Apostolic authority has declared Lot was "a righteous man"

(2 Peter, 2. 8), at bottom good, though he contented himself with lamenting the sins that he saw, instead of acting on his own convictions, and withdrawing himself and family from such a sink of corruption. But favour was shown him; and even his bad relatives had, for his sake, an offer of deliverance, which was ridiculed and spurned (2 Peter, 3. 4). 15-17. The kindly interest the angels took in the preservation of Lot is beautifully displayed. But he "lingered." Was it from sorrow at the prospect of losing all his property, the acquisition of many years? Or was it that his benevolent heart was paralyzed by thoughts of the awful crisis? This is the charitable way of accounting for a delay that must have been fatal but for the friendly violence and urgency of the angel. 18, 19. **Lot said . . . Oh! not so, my Lord . . . I cannot escape to the mountain** — What a strange want of faith and fortitude, as if He who had interfered for his rescue would not have protected him in the mountain solitude. 21. **See, I have accepted thee concerning this . . . also** — His request was granted him, the prayer of faith availed, and to convince him, from his own experience, that it would have been best and safest at once to follow implicitly the Divine directions. 22. **Haste . . . for I cannot do any thing till thou become thither** — The ruin of Sodom was suspended till he was secure. What care does God take of His people (Revelation, 7. 3) — what a proof of the love which God bore to a good though weak man! 24. **Then the Lord rained . . . brimstone and fire from . . . heaven** — God, in accomplishing His purposes, acts immediately or mediately through the agency of means; and there are strong grounds for believing that it was in the latter way he effected the overthrow of the cities of the plain — that it was, in fact, by a volcanic eruption. The raining down of fire and brimstone from heaven is perfectly accordant with this idea, since those very substances, being raised into the air by the force of the volcano, would fall in a fiery shower on the surrounding region. This view seems countenanced by Job. Whether it was miraculously produced, or the natural operation employed by God, it is not of much consequence to determine; it was a Divine judgment, foretold and designed for the punishment of those who were sinners exceedingly. 26. Lot was accompanied by his wife and two daughters. But whether it was from irresistible curiosity or perturbation of feeling, or she was about to return to save something, his wife lingered, and while thus disobeying the parting counsel, "to look not back, nor stay in all the plain," the torrent of liquid lava enveloped her, so that she became the victim of her supine indolence or sinful rashness. 27. **Abraham gat up early in the morning, &c.** — Abraham was at this time in Mamre, near Hebron, and a traveler last year verified the truth of this passage. "From the height which overlooks Hebron, where the patriarch stood, the observer at the present day has an extensive view spread out before him toward the Dead sea. A cloud of smoke rising from the plain would be visible to a person at Hebron now, and could have been, therefore, to Abraham as he looked toward Sodom on the morning of its destruction by God." [HACKETT.] It must have been an awful



sight, and is frequently alluded to in Scripture (Deuteronomy, 29. 23; Isaiah, 13. 19; Jude, 7). "The plain which is now covered by the Salt or Dead sea shows in the great difference of level between the bottoms of the northern and southern ends of the lake — the latter being 13 feet and the former 1,300 — that the southern end was of recent formation, and submerged at the time of the fall of the cities." [LYNCH.] 29. **when God destroyed the cities, &c.** — This is most welcome and instructive after so painful a narrative. It shows if God is a "consuming fire" to the wicked, He is the friend of the righteous. He "remembered" the intercessions of Abraham, and what confidence should not this give us that He will remember the intercessions of a greater than Abraham in our behalf.

## CHAPTER XX.

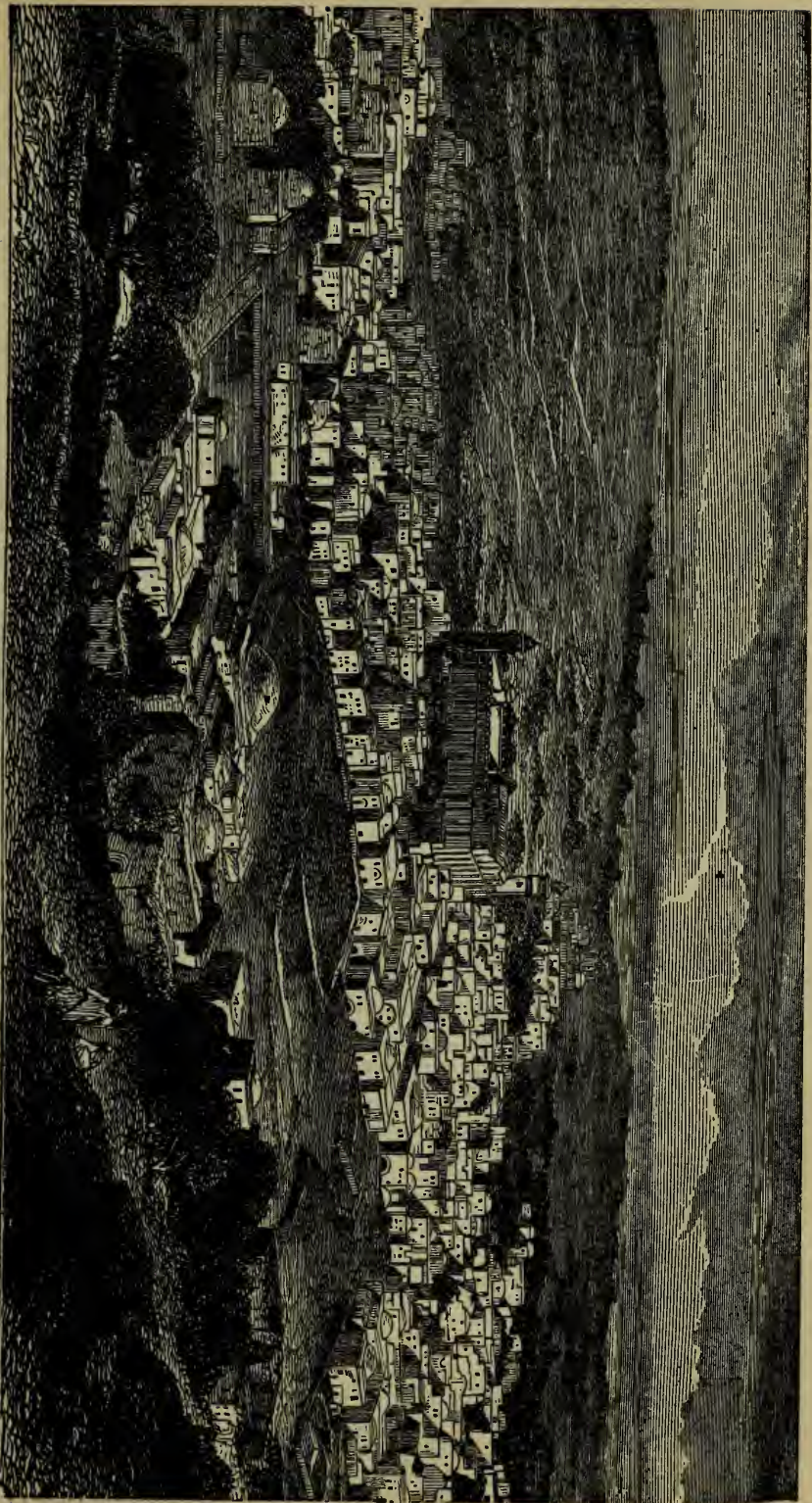
**1-18. ABRAHAM'S DENIAL OF HIS WIFE.** 1. **Abraham journeyed from thence . . . and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur** — Leaving the encampment, he migrated to the southern border of Canaan. In the neighbourhood of Gerar was a very rich and well-watered pasture land. 2. **Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister** — Fear of the people amongst whom he was, tempted him to equivocate. His conduct was highly culpable. It was deceit, deliberate and premeditated — there was no sudden pressure upon him — it was the second offense of the kind — it was a distrust of God every way surprising, and it was calculated to produce injurious effects on the heathen around. Its mischievous tendency was not long in being developed. **Abimelech (father-king) . . . sent and took Sarah** — to be one of his wives. In the exercise of a privilege claimed by Eastern sovereigns, already explained, ch. 12. 19. 3. **But God came to Abimelech in a dream** — In early times a dream was often made the medium of communicating important truths; and this method was adopted for the preservation of Sarah. 9. **Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said . . . What hast thou done?** — In what a humiliating plight does the patriarch now appear — he, a servant of the true God, rebuked by a heathen prince. Who would not rather be in the place of Abimelech than of the honoured but sadly offending patriarch! What a dignified attitude is that of the king — calmly and justly reproving the sin of the prophet, but respecting his person, and heaping coals of fire on his head by the liberal presents made to him. 11. **Abraham said . . . I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place** — From the horrible vices of Sodom he seems to have taken up the impression, that all other cities of Canaan were equally corrupt. There might have been few or none who feared God, but what a sad thing when men of the world show a higher sense of honour and a greater abhorrence of crimes than a true worshipper! 12. **yet indeed she is my sister** — See on ch. 11. 31. What a poor defense Abraham made. The statement absolved him from the charge of direct and absolute falsehood, but he had told a moral untruth, because there was an intention to deceive (Cf. ch. 12. 11-13). "Honesty is always the best policy." Abraham's life would have

been as well protected without the fraud as with it; and what shame to himself—what distrust to God—what dishonour to religion might have been prevented! “Let us speak truth every man to his neighbour.”

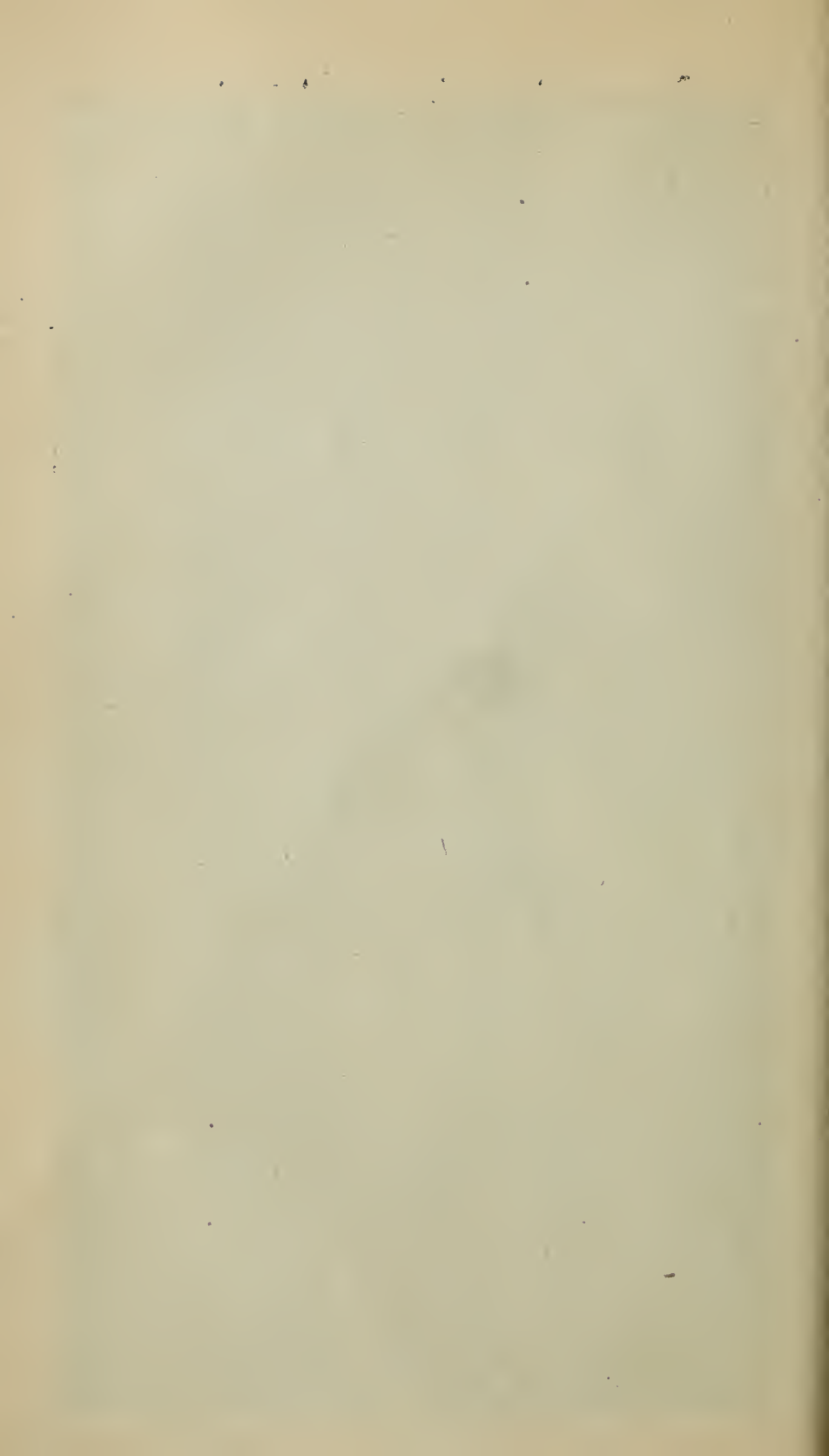
## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-13. BIRTH OF ISAAC.** **1. the Lord visited Sarah**—The language of the historian seems designedly chosen to magnify the power of God as well as His faithfulness to His promise. It was God’s grace that brought about that event, as well as the raising of spiritual children to Abraham, of which the birth of this son was typical. [CALVIN.] **3, 4. Abraham called the name of his son . . . Isaac . . . and circumcised**—God was acknowledged in the name which, by Divine command, was given for a memorial (Cf. ch. 17. 19), and also in the dedication of the child by administering the seal of the covenant (Cf. ch. 17. 10-12). **8. the child grew, and was weaned**—children are suckled longer in the East than in Europe—boys usually for two or three years. **Abraham made a great feast, &c.**—In Eastern countries this is always a season of domestic festivity, and the newly-weaned child is formally brought, in presence of the assembled relatives and friends, to partake of some simple viands. Isaac, attired in the symbolic robe—the badge of birthright—was then admitted heir of the tribe. [ROSENMULLER.] **9. Sarah saw the son of Hagar . . . mocking**—Ishmael was aware of the great change in his prospects, and under the impulse of irritated or resentful feelings, in which he was probably joined by his mother, treated the young heir with derision and probably some violence (Galatians, 4. 29). **10. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman**—Nothing but the expulsion of both could now preserve harmony in the household. Abraham’s perplexity was relieved by an announcement of the Divine will, which in every thing, however painful to flesh and blood, all who fear God and are walking in his ways will, like him, promptly obey. This story, as the apostle tells us, is “an allegory,” and the “persecution” by the son of the *Egyptian* was the commencement of the four hundred years’ affliction of Abraham’s seed by the *Egyptians*. **12. in all that Sarah hath said**—it is called the Scripture (Galatians, 4. 30). **13. also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation**—Thus Providence overruled a family brawl to give rise to two great and extraordinary peoples.

**14-21. EXPULSION OF ISHMAEL.** **14. Abraham rose up early, &c.**—early, that the wanderers might reach an asylum before noon. Bread includes all sorts of victuals, bottle, a leathern vessel, formed of the entire skin of a lamb or kid sewed up, with the legs for handles, usually carried over the shoulder. Ishmael was a lad of seventeen years, and it is quite customary for Arab chiefs to send out their sons at such an age to do for themselves; often with nothing but a few days’ provisions in a bag. **wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba**—In the southern border of Palestine put out of the common direction, a wide extending desert, where they missed the track. **15. the water was spent, &c.**—Ishmael



The City of Hebron (1).



sunk exhausted from fatigue and thirst, his mother laid his head under one of the bushes to smell the damp, while she herself, unable to witness his distress, sat down at a little distance in hopeless sorrow. 19. **God opened her eyes**—Had she forgotten the promise (ch. 16. 11)? Whether she looked to God or not, He regarded her and directed her to a fountain close beside her, but, probably, hid amid brushwood, by the waters of which her almost expiring son was revived. 20, 21. **God was with the lad, &c.**—Paran, *i. e.*, Arabia, where his posterity have ever dwelt (Cf. ch. 16. 12; also Isaiah, 48. 19; 1 Peter, 1. 25). **his mother took him a wife**—On a father's death the mother looks out for a wife for her son, however young; and as Ishmael was now virtually deprived of his father, his mother set about forming a marriage connection for him, it would seem, amongst her relatives.

22-34. COVENANT. 22. **Abimelech and Phichol**—Here a proof of the promise (ch. 12. 2) being fulfilled, in a native prince wishing to form a solemn league with Abraham. The proposal was reasonable and agreed to. 25-31. **Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well**—Wells were of great importance to a pastoral chief, and on the successful operation of sinking a new one, the owner was solemnly infest in person. If, however, they were allowed to get out of repair, the restorer acquired a right to them. In unoccupied lands the possession of wells gave a right of property in the land, and dread of this had caused the offense for which Abraham reproved Abimelech. Some describe four, others five wells in Beer-sheba. 33. **Abraham planted a grove**—*Hebrew* of tamarisks, in which sacrificial worship was offered as in a roofless temple. 34. **Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land**—A picture of pastoral and an emblem of Christian life.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1-19. OFFERING ISAAC. 1. **God did tempt Abraham**—not incite to sin (James, 1. 13), but try, prove, give occasion for the development of his faith (1 Peter, 1. 7). **and he said . . . Here I am**—ready at a moment's warning for God's service. 2. **Take now thy son, &c.**—Every circumstance mentioned was calculated to give a deeper stab to the parental bosom. To lose his only son, and by an act of his own hand, too! what a host of conflicting feelings must the order have raised; but he heard and obeyed without a murmur (Galatians, 1. 16; Luke, 14. 26). 3. **Abraham rose . . . early, &c.**—That there might be no appearance of delay or reluctance on his part he made every preparation for the sacrifice before setting out, the materials, the knife, the servants to convey them, from Beer-sheba to Moriah, being a journey of two days; he had the painful secret pent up in his bosom all that time; and as so distant a place must have been chosen for some important reason it is generally thought that "the place of which God had told him" was one of the hills of Jerusalem, on which the Great Sacrifice was afterward offered. 4. **on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, &c.**—Leaving the servants at the foot, the father and son ascended

the hill, the one bearing the knife; the other the wood for consuming the sacrifice. But there was no victim; and to the question so naturally put by Isaac, Abraham contented himself with replying, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." It has been supposed that the design of this extraordinary transaction was to show him, by action instead of words, the way in which all the families of the earth should be blessed; and that in his answer to Isaac he anticipated some substitution. It is more likely that his words were spoken evasively to his son, in ignorance of the issue, yet in unbounded confidence that that son, though sacrificed, would, in some miraculous way, be restored (Hebrews, II. 19). 9. **Abraham built an altar, &c.**—Had not the patriarch been sustained by the full consciousness of acting in obedience to God's will, the effort must have been too great for human endurance; and had not Isaac, then upwards of twenty years of age, displayed equal faith in submitting, this great trial could not have been gone through. 11, 12. **the angel . . . called, &c.**—The sacrifice was virtually offered, the intention, the purpose to do it, was shown in all sincerity and fullness. The Omniscient witness likewise declared His acceptance in the highest terms of approval; and the apostle speaks of it as actually made (Hebrews, II. 17; James, 2. 21). 13-19. **Abraham lifted up his eyes . . . and behold . . . a ram, &c.**—No method was more admirably calculated to give the patriarch a distinct idea of the purpose of grace than this scenic representation; and hence our Lord's allusion to it (John, 8. 56).

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1, 2. AGE AND DEATH OF SARAH. 1. **Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old, &c.**—The only woman in Scripture whose age, death and burial are mentioned, probably to do honour to the venerable mother of the Hebrew people. 2. **Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, &c.**—He came from his own tent to take his station at the door of Sarah's. The "mourning" describes his conformity to the customary usage of sitting on the ground for a time; while the "weeping" indicates the natural outburst of his sorrow.

3-20. PURCHASE OF A BURYING-PLACE. 3. **Abraham stood up, &c.**—Eastern people are always provided with family burying-places; but Abraham's life of faith—his pilgrim state—had prevented him acquiring even so small a possession (Acts, 7. 5). **spake unto the sons of Heth**—he bespoke their kind offices to aid him in obtaining possession of a cave that belonged to Ephron—a wealthy neighbour. 9. **Machpelah**—the *double cave*. 10. **Ephron dwelt**—*lit.*, was "sitting" among the children of Heth in the gate of the city where all business was transacted. But, though a chief man among them, he was probably unknown to Abraham. 11-15. **Ephron answered, Nay, my Lord, &c.**—Here is a great show of generosity—but it was only a show; for while Abraham wanted only the cave—he joins "the field and the cave;" and though he offered them both as free gifts—he, of course, at

pected some costly presents in return — with which he would not have been easily satisfied. The patriarch, knowing this, wished to make a purchase, and asked the terms. 15. **the land is worth four hundred shekels, &c.** — as if Ephron had said, Since you wish to know the value of the property, it is so and so ; but that is a trifle, which you may pay or not, as it suits you. They spoke in the common forms of Arab civility, and this indifference was mere affectation. 16. **Abraham weighed . . . the silver** — The money, amounting to £50, was paid in presence of the assembled witnesses ; and it was weighed. The practice of weighing money, which is often in lumps or rings, stamped each with their weight, is still common in many parts of the East ; and every merchant at the gates or the bazar has his scales at his girdle. 19. **Abraham buried Sarah** — Thus he got possession of Machpelah, and deposited the remains of his lamented partner in a family vault, which was the only spot of ground he owned.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

**1-9. A MARRIAGE COMMISSION. I. And Abraham was old . . . take a wife** — His anxiety to see his son married was natural to his position as a pastoral chief interested in preserving the honour of his tribe, and still more as a patriarch who had regard to the Divine promise of a numerous posterity. 3. **thou shalt not take a wife, &c.** — Among the pastoral tribes the matrimonial arrangements are made by the parents, and a youth must marry, not among strangers, but in his own tribe — custom giving him a claim, which is seldom or never resisted, to the hand of his first cousin. But Abraham had a far higher motive — a fear lest if his son married into a Canaanitish family he might be gradually led away from the true God. **said unto his eldest servant** — Abraham being too old, and as the heir of the promise not being at liberty to make even a temporary visit to his native land, was obliged to intrust this delicate mission to Eliezer, whom, although putting entire confidence in him, he on this occasion bound by a solemn oath. A pastoral chief in the present day would take the same plan if he could not go himself.

**10-67. THE JOURNEY. 10. the servant took ten camels, &c.** — So great an equipage was to give the embassy an appearance worthy of the rank and wealth of Abraham ; to carry provisions ; to bear the marriage presents, which as usual would be distributed over several beasts ; besides one or two spare camels in case of emergency. **went to Mesopotamia, &c.** — A stranger in those regions, who wishes to obtain information, stations himself at one of the wells in the neighbourhood of a town, and he is sure to learn all the news of the place from the women who frequent them every morning and evening. Eliezer followed this course, and letting his camels rest, he waited till the evening time of water-drawing. 12. **And he said, O Lord God of my master** — The servant appears worthy of the master he served. He resolves to follow the leading of Providence ; and while he shows good sense in the tokens he

fixes upon of ascertaining the temper and character of the future bride, never doubts but that in such a case God will direct him. 15-21. **before he had done speaking . . . behold, Rebekah came out** — as he anticipated, a young woman unveiled, as in pastoral regions, appeared with her pitcher on her shoulder. Her comely appearance, her affable manners, her obliging courtesy in going down the steps to fetch water not only to him, but to pour it into the trough for his camels, afforded him the most agreeable surprise. She was the very person his imagination had pictured, and he proceeded to reward her civility. 22. **the man took a golden earring, &c.** — The ring was not for the ear, but the nose; and the armlets, such as young women in Syria and Arabia still appear daily at wells decked in. They are worn from the elbow to the wrist, commonly made of silver, copper, brass or horn. 23-27. **And said, Whose daughter art thou?** — After telling her name and family, the kind-hearted damsel hastened home to give notice of a stranger's arrival. 28. **and told them of her mother's house these things** — the female apartments. This family were in an advanced stage of pastoral life, dwelling in a settled place and a fixed habitation. 29-31. **Rebekah had a brother . . . Laban ran out** — From what we know of his character, there is reason to believe that the sight of the dazzling presents increased both his haste and his invitation. 32-49. **the man came into the house, &c.** — What a beautiful picture of piety, fidelity and disinterestedness in a servant! He declined all attention to his own comforts till he had told his name and his errand. 50. **Then Laban and Bethuel answered** — The brothers conduct all the marriage negotiations, their father being probably dead, and without consulting their sister. Their language seems to indicate they were worshippers of the true God. 53. **And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and . . . gold** — These are the usual articles, with money, that form a woman's dowry among the pastoral tribes. Rebekah was betrothed, and accompanied the servant to Canaan. 64. **she lighted off the camel** — If Isaac was walking it would have been most unmannerly for her to have continued seated; an inferior, if riding, always alights in presence of a person of rank, no exception being made for women. 65. **she took a veil, and covered herself** — The veil is an essential part of female dress. In country places it is often thrown aside, but on the appearance of a stranger it is drawn over the face, so as to conceal all but the eyes. In a bride it was a token of her reverence and subjection to her husband. 67. **And Isaac brought her into his mother's . . . tent** — thus establishing her at once in the rights and honours of a wife before he had seen her features. Disappointments often take place, but when Isaac saw his wife "he loved her."

## CHAPTER XXV.

1-6. SONS OF ABRAHAM. I. **Abraham took a wife** — rather *had taken*; for Keturah is called Abraham's concubine, or secondary wife (1 Chronicles, I, 32); and as, from her bearing six sons to



him, it is impossible that he married after Sarah's death; and also as he sent them all out to seek their own independence, during his life-time, it is clear that this marriage is related here out of its chronological order, merely to form a proper winding up of the patriarch's history. 5, 6. **Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac . . . unto the sons of the concubines . . . Abraham gave gifts**—While the chief part of the inheritance went to Isaac—the other sons, Ishmael included, migrated to “the East country,” *i. e.*, Arabia—received each a portion of the patrimony, perhaps in cattle and other things; and this settlement of Abraham's must have given satisfaction, since it is still the rule followed among the pastoral tribes.

**7-II. DEATH OF ABRAHAM.** 7. **these are the days of . . . Abraham**—His death is here related, though he lived till Isaac and Esau were fifteen years, just one hundred years after coming to Canaan, “the father of the faithful,” “the friend of God,” died; and even in his death, the promises were fulfilled (Cf. ch. 15. 15). We might have wished some memorials of his death-bed experience; but the Spirit of God has withheld them—nor was it necessary; for (see Matthew, 7. 16) from earth he passed into heaven (Luke, 16. 22). Though dead he yet liveth (Matthew, 22. 32). 9, 10. **his sons . . . buried him**—Death often puts an end to strife—reconciles those who have been alienated; and brings rival relations, as in this instance, to mingle tears over a father's grave.

**12-18. DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL.** Before passing to the line of the promised seed, the historian gives a brief notice of Ishmael, to show that the promises respecting that son of Abraham were fulfilled—first, in the **GREATNESS** of his posterity (Cf. ch. 17. 20); and, secondly, in their independence. 18. **he died**—rather “it (their lot) fell in the presence of his brethren” (Cf. ch. 16. 12).

**19-35. HISTORY OF ISAAC.** 19. **these are the generations**—account of the leading events in his life. 21. **Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife**—Though tried in a similar way to his father, he did not follow the same crooked policy. Twenty years he continued unblessed with offspring, whose seed was to be “as the stars.” But in answer to their mutual prayers (1 Peter, 3. 7) Rebekah was divinely informed, that she was to be the mother of twins, who should be the progenitors of two independent nations; that the descendants of the younger should act the more powerful and subdue those of the other (Romans, 9. 12; 2 Chronicles, 21. 8). 27. **the boys grew**—from the first opposite to each other in character, manners and habits. 28. The parents were divided in their affection; and while the grounds, at least of the father's partiality, were weak—the distinction made between the children led, as such conduct always does, to unhappy consequences. 29. **Jacob sod pottage**—made of lentiles or small beans, which are common in Egypt and Syria. It is probable that it was made of Egyptian beans, which Jacob had procured as a dainty; for Esau was a stranger to it. It is very palatable; and to the weary hunter, faint with hunger, its odour must have been irresistibly tempting. 31. **Jacob said, Sell me . . . thy birthright**—*i. e.*, the rights and privileges of the first-born—which were very important—the chief

being that they were the family priests (Exodus, 4. 22); and had a double portion of the inheritance (Deuteronomy, 21. 17). 32. **Esau said . . . I am at the point to die** — *i. e.*, I am running daily risk of my life; and of what use will the birthright be to me; so he despised or cared little about it, in comparison of gratifying his appetite — he threw away his religious privileges for a trifle; and thence he is styled — “a profane person” (Hebrews, 12. 16; also Job, 31. 7, 16; 6. 13; Philippians, 3. 19). “There was never any meat, except the forbidden fruit, so dear bought, as this broth of Jacob.” [BISHOP HALL.]

## CHAPTER XXVI.

**1-35. SOJOURN IN GERAR.** 1. **And there was a famine in the land . . . and Isaac went unto . . . Gerar** — The pressure of famine in Canaan forced Isaac with his family and flocks to migrate into the land of the Philistines, where he was exposed to personal danger as his father had been on account of his wife’s beauty; but through the seasonable interposition of Providence he was preserved (Psalm 105. 14, 15). 12. **Then Isaac sowed in that land** — During his sojourn in that district he farmed a piece of land, which, by the blessing of God on his skill and industry, was very productive (Isaiah, 65. 13; Psalm 37. 19), and by his plentiful returns he increased so rapidly in wealth and influence that the Philistines, afraid or envious of his prosperity, obliged him to leave the place (Proverbs, 27. 4; Ecclesiastes, 4. 4). This may receive illustration from the fact that many Syrian shepherds, at this day, settle for a year or two in a place, rent some ground, in the produce of which they trade with the neighbouring market, till the people, through jealousy of their growing substance, refuse to renew their lease and compel them to remove elsewhere. 15. **All the wells which his father’s servants had digged . . . the Philistines had stopped, &c.** — The same base stratagem for annoying those against whom they have taken an umbrage is practiced still by choking the wells with sand or stones or defiling them with putrid carcasses. 17. **valley of Gerar** — torrent-bed or wady, a vast, undulating plain, unoccupied and affording good pasture. 18-22. **Isaac digged again the wells of water** — The naming of wells by Abraham and the hereditary right of his family to the property, the change of the names by the Philistines to obliterate the traces of their origin, the restoration of the names by Isaac and the contests between the respective shepherds to the exclusive possession of the water, are circumstances that occur amongst the natives in those regions as frequently in the present day as in the time of Isaac. 26-33. **Then Abimelech went to him** — As there was a lapse of ninety years between the visit of Abraham and of Isaac, the Abimelech and Phichol spoken of must have been different persons’ official titles. Here is another proof of the promise (ch. 12. 2) being fulfilled, in an overture of peace being made to him by the king of Gerar. By whatever motive the proposal was dictated, whether fear of his growing power or regret for the bad usage they had given him, the

king and two of his courtiers paid a visit to the tent of Isaac (Proverbs, 16. 7). His timid and passive temper had submitted to the annoyances of his rude neighbours—but now that they wish to renew the covenant, he evinces deep feeling at their conduct, and astonishment at their assurance, or artifice, in coming near him. Being, however, of a pacific disposition, he forgave their offense, accepted their proposals, and treated them to the banquet by which the ratification of a covenant was usually crowned.

34. **Esau . . . took to wife**—If the pious feelings of Abraham recoiled from the idea of Isaac forming a matrimonial connection with a Canaanitish woman, that devout patriarch himself would be equally opposed to such a union on the part of his children; and we may easily imagine how much his pious heart was wounded and the family peace destroyed, when his favourite but wayward son brought no less than two idolatrous wives among them—an additional proof that Esau neither desired the blessing nor dreaded the curse of God. These wives never gained the affections of his parents, and this estrangement was overruled by God for keeping the chosen family aloof from the dangers of heathen influence.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1-27. **INFIRMITY OF ISAAC.** I. **when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim**—He was in his 137th year; and apprehending death to be near, he prepared to make his last will—an act of the gravest importance, especially as it included the conveyance through a prophetic spirit of the patriarchal blessing. 4. **make . . . savoury meat**—perhaps to revive and strengthen him for the duty; or rather, “as eating and drinking” were used on all religious occasions, he could not convey the right till he had eaten of the meat provided for the purpose by him who was to receive the blessing [ADAM CLARKE] (Cf. ch. 18. 7). **that my soul may bless thee**—It is difficult to imagine him ignorant of the Divine purpose (Cf. ch. 25. 23). But natural affection, prevailing through age and infirmity, prompted him to entail the honours and powers of the birthright on his eldest son; and, perhaps, he was not aware of what Esau had done (ch. 25. 34). 5-10. **Rebekah spake unto Jacob**—she prized the blessing as invaluable—she knew that God intended it for the younger son; and in her anxiety to secure its being conferred on the right object—on one who cared for religion—she acted in the sincerity of faith; but in crooked policy—with unenlightened zeal; on the false principle that the end would sanctify the means. II. **Jacob said, Esau my brother is a hairy man**—It is remarkable that his scruples were founded not on the evil of the act, but the risk and consequences of deception. 13-17. **and his mother said, Upon me be thy curse**—His conscience being soothed by his mother—preparations were hastily made for carrying out the device; consisting, first, of a kid's flesh, which, made into a ragout, spiced with salt, onions, garlic and lemon-juice, might easily be passed off on a blind old man, with blunted senses, as game; secondly, of pieces of goat's

skin bound on his hands and neck, its soft, silken hair resembling that on the cheek of a young man ; thirdly, of the long white robe — the vestment of the first-born, which, transmitted from father to son, and kept in a chest among fragrant herbs and perfumed flowers, used much in the East to keep away moths — his mother provided for him. 18-27. **he came unto his father** — The scheme planned by the mother was to be executed by the son in the father's bed-chamber ; and it is painful to think of the deliberate falsehoods, as well as daring profanity, he resorted to. The disguise, though wanting in one thing, which had nearly upset the whole plot, succeeded in misleading Isaac ; and while giving his paternal embrace, the old man was roused into a state of high satisfaction and delight. 27. **the smell of my son is as of a field** — The aromatic odours of the Syrian fields and meadows often impart a strong fragrance to the persons and clothes, as has been noticed by many travelers.

28-46. **THE BLESSING. God give thee of the dew of heaven** — To an Oriental mind, this phraseology implied the highest flow of prosperity. The copious fall of dew is indispensable to the fruitfulness of lands, which would be otherwise arid and sterile through the violent heat ; and it abounds most in hilly regions — such as Canaan — hence called the fat land (Nehemiah, 9. 25, 35). **plenty of corn and wine** — Palestine was famous for vineyards, and it produced varieties of corn, *viz.*, wheat, barley, oats and rye. **Let people serve thee** — fulfilled in the discomfiture of the hostile tribes that opposed the Israelites in the wilderness ; and in the pre-eminence and power they attained after their national establishment in the promised land. This blessing was not realized to Jacob, but to his descendants ; and the temporal blessings promised, were but a shadow of those spiritual ones, which formed the grand distinction of Jacob's posterity. 30-35. **Esau came in from his hunting** — scarcely had the former scene been concluded, when the fraud was discovered. The emotions of Isaac, as well as Esau, may easily be imagined — the astonishment, alarm and sorrow of the one — the disappointment and indignation of the other. But a moment's reflection convinced the aged patriarch that the transfer of the blessing was "of the Lord," and now irrevocable. The importunities of Esau, however, overpowered him ; and as the prophetic afflatus was upon the patriarch, he added what was probably as pleasing to a man of Esau's character, as the other would have been. 39, 40. **Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth** — The first part is a promise of temporal prosperity, made in the same terms as Jacob's — the second refers to the roving life of hunting freebooters, which he and his descendants should lead. Though Esau was not personally subject to his brother, his posterity were tributary to the Israelites, till the reign of Joram — when they revolted, and established a king of their own (2 Kings, 8. 20 ; 2 Chron. 21. 8-10). 41. **Esau hated Jacob** — It is scarcely to be wondered at — that Esau resented the conduct of Jacob, and vowed revenge. **The days of mourning for my father are at hand** — a common Oriental phrase for the death of a parent. 42-45. **these words of Esau were told Rebekah** — Poor woman ! she now

early begins to reap the bitter fruits of her fraudulent device ; she is obliged to part with her son, for whom she planned it, never, probably, seeing him again ; and he felt the retributive justice of heaven fall upon him heavily in his own future family. 45. **why should I be deprived of you both**—This refers to the law of Goelism, by which the nearest of kin would be obliged to avenge the death of Jacob upon his brother. 46. **Rebekah said to Isaac**—Another pretext her cunning had to devise to obtain her husband's consent to Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia ; and she succeeded by touching the aged patriarch in a tender point, afflicting to his pious heart—the proper marriage of their younger son.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**1-19. JACOB'S DEPARTURE.** **1. Isaac called Jacob and blessed him**—He entered fully into Rebekah's feelings—and the burden of his parting counsel to his son was, to avoid a marriage alliance with any but the Mesopotamian branch of the family. At the same time he gave him a solemn blessing—pronounced before unwittingly, now designedly, and with a cordial spirit. It is more explicitly and fully given, and Jacob was thus acknowledged "the heir of the promise." 6-9. **when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob**—desirous to humour his parents, and if possible get the last will revoked, he became wise when too late (see Matthew, 25. 10), and hoped by gratifying his parents in one thing to atone for all his former delinquencies. But he only made bad worse, and though he did not marry a "wife of the daughters of Canaan," he married into a family which God had rejected—it showed a partial reformation, but no repentance, for he gave no proofs of abating his vindictive purposes against his brother, nor cherishing that pious spirit that would have gratified his father—he was like Micah (see Judges, 17. 13). 10. **Jacob went out, &c.**—His departure from his father's house was an ignominious flight ; and for fear of being pursued or waylaid by his brother, he did not take the common road, but went by lonely and unfrequented paths, which increased the length and dangers of the journey. 11. **he lighted upon a certain place**—By a forced march he had reached Beth-el, about forty-eight miles from Beer-sheba, and had to spend the night in the open field. **he took of the stones, &c.**—"The nature of the soil is an existing comment on the record of the stony territory where Jacob lay." [CLARKE'S TRAVELS.] 12. **he dreamed . . . and behold a ladder**—Some writers are of opinion that it was not a literal ladder that is meant, as it is impossible to conceive any imagery stranger and more unnatural than that of a ladder, whose base was on earth, while its top reached heaven, without having any thing on which to rest its upper extremity. They suppose that the little heap of stones, on which his head reclined for a pillow, being the miniature model of the object that appeared to his imagination, the ladder was a gigantic mountain pile, whose sides, indented in the rock, gave it the appearance of a scaling ladder. There can be no doubt that this use of the original

term was common among the early Hebrews; as Josephus, describing the town of Ptolemais (Acre), says it was bounded by a mountain, which, from its projecting sides, was called "the ladder;" and the stairs that led down to the city are, in the original, termed a ladder (Nehemiah, 3) though they were only a flight of steps cut in the side of the rock. But whether the image presented to the mental eye of Jacob were a common ladder, or such a mountain pile as has been described, the design of this vision was to afford comfort, encouragement and confidence to the lonely fugitive, both in his present circumstances and as to his future prospects. His thoughts during the day must have been painful—he would be his own self-accuser that he had brought exile and privation upon himself—and above all, that though he had obtained the forgiveness of his father, he had much reason to fear lest God might have forsaken him. Solitude affords time for reflection; and it was now that God began to bring Jacob under a course of religious instruction and training. To dispel his fears and allay the inward tumult of his mind, nothing was better fitted than the vision of the gigantic ladder, which reached from himself to heaven, and on which the angels were continually ascending and descending from God himself on their benevolent errands (John, I. 51). 13. **the Lord stood above it, and said**—That Jacob might be at no loss to know the purport of the vision, he heard the Divine voice; and the announcement of His name, together with a renewal of the covenant, and an assurance of personal protection, produced at once the most solemnizing and inspiriting effect on his mind. 16 **Jacob awaked out of his sleep**—His language and his conduct were alike that of a man whose mind was pervaded by sentiments of solemn awe, of fervent piety and lively gratitude (Jeremiah, 31. 36). 18, 19. **Jacob set up a stone, &c.**—The mere setting up of the stone might have been as a future memorial to mark the spot; and this practice is still common in the East, in memory of a religious vow or engagement. But the pouring oil upon it was a consecration. Accordingly he gave it a new name, Beth-el, "the house of God" (Hosea, 12. 4); and it will not appear a thing forced or unnatural to call a stone a house, when one considers the common practice in warm countries of sitting in the open air by or on a stone as are those of this place, "broad sheets of bare rock, some of them standing like the cromlechs of Druidical monuments." [STANLEY.]

20-22. **JACOB'S VOW.** 20. **Jacob vowed a vow**—His words are not to be considered as implying a doubt, far less as stating the condition or terms on which he would dedicate himself to God. Let "if" be changed into "since," and the language will appear a proper expression of Jacob's faith—an evidence of his having truly embraced the promise. How edifying often to meditate on Jacob at Beth-el!

## CHAPTER XXIX.

**1-35. THE WELL OF HARAN. 1. Then Jacob went, &c.**—*Hebrew*, lifted up his feet. He resumed his way next morning with a light heart and elastic step after the vision of the ladder; for tokens of the Divine favour tend to quicken the discharge of duty (Nehemiah, 8. 10). **and came into the land, &c.**—Mesopotamia and the whole region beyond the Euphrates are by the sacred writers designated “the East” (Judges, 6. 3; 1 Kings, 4. 32; Job, 1. 3). Between the first and the second clause of this verse is included a journey of four hundred miles. **2. And he looked, &c.**—As he approached the place of his destination, he, according to custom, repaired to the well adjoining the town where he would obtain an easy introduction to his relatives. **3. thither were all the flocks gathered: and a stone, &c.**—In Arabia, owing to the shifting sands, and in other places, owing to the strong evaporation, the mouth of a well is generally covered, especially when it is private property. Over many is laid a broad, thick flat stone, with a round hole cut in the middle, forming the mouth of the cistern. This hole is covered with a heavy stone which it would require two or three men to roll away. Such was the description of the well at Haran. **4. Jacob said, My brethren**—Finding from the shepherds who were reposing there with flocks, and who all belonged to Haran, that his relatives in Haran were well, and that one of the family was shortly expected, he inquired why they were idling the best part of the day there instead of watering their flocks, and sending them back to pasturage? **8. They said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered**—In order to prevent the consequences of too frequent exposure in places where water is scarce, it is not only covered, but it is customary to have all the flocks collected round the well before the covering is removed in presence of the owner or one of his representatives; and it was for this reason that those who were reposing at the well of Haran with the three flocks were waiting the arrival of Rachel. **9-11. While he yet spake, Rachel came**—Among the pastoral tribes the young unmarried daughters of the greatest sheiks tend the flocks, going out at sunrise, and continuing to watch their fleecy charge till sunset. Watering them, which is done twice a-day, is a work of time and labour, and Jacob rendered no small service in volunteering his aid to the young shepherdess. The interview was affecting, the reception welcome, and Jacob forgot all his toils in the society of his Mesopotamian relatives. Can we doubt that he returned thanks to God for His goodness by the way? **12. Jacob told Rachel, &c.**—According to the practice of the East, the term “brother” is extended to remote degrees of relationship, as uncle, cousin, or nephew. **14-20. he abode a month**—Among pastoral people a stranger is freely entertained for three days; on the fourth he is expected to tell his name and errand; and if he prolongs his stay after that time, he must set his hand to work in some way, as may be agreed upon. A similar rule obtained in Laban’s establishment. and the wages for which his nephew engaged to continue in his

employment was the hand of Rachel. 17. **Leah tender-eyed** — *i. e.*, soft blue eyes — thought a blemish. **Rachel beautiful and well-favoured** — *i. e.*, comely and handsome in form. The latter was Jacob's choice. 18. **I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy daughter** — A proposal of marriage is made to the father without the daughter being consulted, and the match is effected by the suitor either bestowing costly presents on the family, or by giving cattle to the value the father sets upon his daughter, or else by giving personal services for a specified period. The last was the course necessity imposed on Jacob; and there for seven years he submitted to the drudgery of a hired shepherd, with the view of obtaining Rachel. The time went rapidly away; for even severe and difficult duties become light when love is the spring of action. 21. **Jacob said, Give me my wife** — At the expiry of the stipulated term the marriage festivities were held. But an infamous fraud was practiced on Jacob, and on his showing a righteous indignation, the usage of the country was pleaded in excuse. No plea of kindred should ever be allowed to come in opposition to the claim of justice. But this is often overlooked by the selfish mind of man, and fashion or custom rules instead of the will of God. This was what Laban did, as he said, "it must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born." But, then, if that were the prevailing custom of society at Haran, he should have apprized his nephew of it at an early period and in an honourable manner. This, however, is too much the way with the people of the East still. The duty of marrying an elder daughter before a younger, the tricks which parents take to get off an elder daughter that is plain or deformed, and in which they are favoured by the long bridal veil that entirely conceals her features all the wedding day, and the prolongation for a week of the marriage festivities among the greater sheiks, are accordant with the habits of the people in Arabia and Armenia in the present day. 28. **gave him Rachel also** — It is evident that the marriage of both sisters took place nearly about the same time, and that such a connection was then allowed, though afterward prohibited (Leviticus, 18. 18). 29. **gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah to be her maid** — A father in good circumstances still gives his daughter from his household a female slave, over whom the young wife, independently of her husband, has the absolute control. 31. **Leah . . . hated** — *i. e.*, not loved so much as she ought to have been. Her becoming a mother ensured her rising in the estimation both of her husband and of society. 32-35. **son . . . called his name Reuben** — Names were always significant; and those which Leah gave to her sons were expressive of her varying feelings of thankfulness or joy, or allusive to circumstances in the history of the family. There was piety and wisdom in attaching a signification to names, as it tended to keep the bearer in remembrance of his duty and the claims of God



## CHAPTER XXX.

**1-24. DOMESTIC JEALOUSIES.** 1. **Rachel envied her sister**— The maternal relation confers a high degree of honour in the East, and the want of that status is felt as a stigma, and deplored as a grievous calamity. **Give me children or else I die**— either be reckoned as good as dead, or pine away from vexation. The intense anxiety of Hebrew women for children arose from the hope of giving birth to the promised seed. Rachel's conduct was sinful, and contrasts unfavourably with that of Rebekah (Cf. ch. 25. 22) and of Hannah (1 Samuel, I. 11). 3-9. **Bilhah . . . Zilpah**— Following the example of Sarah with regard to Hagar, an example which is not seldom imitated still, she adopted the children of her maid. Leah took the same course. A bitter and intense rivalry existed between them, all the more from their close relationship as sisters; and although they occupied separate apartments, with their families, as is the uniform custom where a plurality of wives obtains, and the husband and father spends a day with each in regular succession, that did not allay their mutual jealousies. The evil lies in the system, which being a violation of God's original ordinance, cannot yield happiness. 20. **Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry**— The birth of a son is hailed with demonstrations of joy, and the possession of several sons confers upon the mother an honour and respectability proportioned to their number. The husband attaches a similar importance to the possession, and it forms a bond of union which renders it impossible for him ever to forsake or to be cold to a wife who has borne him sons. This explains the happy anticipations Leah founded on the possession of her six sons. 21. **afterward, she bare a daughter**— The inferior value set on a daughter is displayed in the bare announcement of the birth.

**25-43. JACOB'S COVENANT WITH LABAN.** 25. **when Rachel had born Joseph**— Shortly after the birth of this son, Jacob's term of servitude expired, and feeling anxious to establish an independence for his family, he probably, from knowing that Esau was out of the way, announced his intention of returning to Canaan (Hebrews, 13. 14). In this resolution the faith of Jacob was remarkable, for as yet he had nothing to rely on but the promise of God (Cf. ch. 28. 15). 27. **Laban said . . . I have learned**— His selfish uncle was averse to a separation, not from warmth of affection either for Jacob or his daughters, but from the damage his own interests would sustain. He had found, from long observation, that the blessing of heaven rested on Jacob, and that his stock had wonderfully increased under Jacob's management. This was a remarkable testimony that good men are blessings to the places where they reside. Men of the world are often blessed with temporal benefits on account of their pious relatives, though they have not always, like Laban, the wisdom to discern, or the grace to acknowledge it. 28. **appoint me thy wages, and I will give it**— The Eastern shepherds receive for their hire not money, but a certain amount of the increase or produce of the flock; but Laban would at the

time have done any thing to secure the continued services of his nephew, and make a show of liberality, which Jacob well knew was constrained. 31. **Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing**—A new agreement was made, the substance of which was, that he was to receive remuneration in the usual way, but on certain conditions which Jacob specified. 32. **I will pass through all thy flock to-day**—Eastern sheep being generally white, the goats black, and spotted or speckled ones comparatively few and rare, Jacob proposed to remove all existing ones of that description from the flock, and to be content with what might appear at the next lambing time. The proposal *seemed* so much in favor of Laban, that he at once agreed to it. But Jacob has been accused of taking advantage of his uncle, and though it is difficult to exculpate him from practicing some degree of dissimulation, he was only availing himself of the results of his great skill and experience in the breeding of cattle. But it is evident from the next chapter (5-13) that there was something miraculous, and that the means he had employed had been suggested by a divine intimation. 37. **Jacob took rods, &c.**—There are many varieties of the hazel, some of which are more erect than the common hazel, and it was probably one of the varieties Jacob employed. The styles are of a bright red color, when peeled; and along with them he took wands of other shrubs, which, when stripped of the bark, had white streaks. These, kept constantly before the eyes of the female at the time of gestation, his observation had taught him would have an influence, through the imagination, on the future offspring. 38. **watering troughs**—usually a long stone block hollowed out, from which several sheep could drink at once, but sometimes so small as to admit of one only drinking at a time.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

1-21. ENVY OF LABAN AND SONS. 1. **he heard the words of Laban's sons**—It must have been from rumour that Jacob got knowledge of the invidious reflections cast upon him by his cousins; for they were separated at the distance of three days' journey. 2. **And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban**—*lit.*, was not the same as yesterday, and the day before;—a common Oriental form of speech. The insinuations against Jacob's fidelity by Laban's sons, and the sullen reserve, the churlish conduct, of Laban himself, had made Jacob's situation, in his uncle's establishment, most trying and painful. It is always one of the vexations attendant on worldly prosperity, that it excites the envy of others (Ecclesiastes, 4. 4); and that, however careful a man is to maintain a good conscience, he cannot always reckon on maintaining a good name, in a censorious world. This, Jacob experienced; and it is probable that, like a good man, he had asked direction and relief in prayer. 3. **the Lord said, . . . Return unto the land of thy fathers**—Notwithstanding the ill usage he had received, Jacob might not have deemed himself at liberty to quit his present sphere, under the impulse of passionate fretfulness and discontent. Having

been conducted to Haran by God (ch. 28. 15); and having got a promise that the same heavenly Guardian would bring him again into the land of Canaan — he might have thought he ought not to leave it, without being clearly persuaded as to the path of duty. So ought we to set the Lord before us, and to acknowledge him in all our ways, our journeys, our settlements, and plans in life. 4. **Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah** — His wives and family were in their usual residence; and whether he wished them to be present at the festivities of sheep-shearing, as some think; or, because he could not leave his flock, he called them both to come to him, in order that, having resolved on immediate departure, he might communicate his intentions, Rachel and Leah only were called, for the other two wives, being secondary, and still in a state of servitude, were not entitled to be taken into account. Jacob acted the part of a dutiful husband in telling them his plans: for husbands, that love their wives, should consult with them, and trust in them (Proverbs, 31. 11). 6. **ye know that . . . I have served your father** — Having stated his strong grounds of dissatisfaction with their father's conduct, and the ill requital he had got for all his faithful services — he informed them of the blessing of God, that had made him rich notwithstanding Laban's design to ruin him; and finally, of the command from God he had received to return to his own country, that they might not accuse him of caprice, or disaffection to their family; but be convinced, that in resolving to depart, he acted from a principle of religious obedience. 14. **Rachel and Leah answered** — Having heard his views, they expressed their entire approval; and from grievances of their own, were fully as desirous of a separation as himself. They display not only conjugal affection, but piety in following the course described — "whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do." "Those that are really their husbands' helps meet, will never be their hindrances in doing that to which God calls them." [HENRY.] 17. **Then Jacob rose up** — Little time is spent by pastoral people in removing. The striking down the tents and poles, and stowing them among their other baggage; the putting their wives and children in *houdas* like cradles, on the backs of camels, or in panniers on asses; and the ranging of the various parts of the flock under the respective shepherds; all this is a short process. A plain that is covered in the morning with a long array of tents, and with browsing flocks, may, in a few hours, appear so desolate, that not a vestige of the encampment remains, except the holes in which the tent-poles had been fixed. 20. **Jacob stole away** — The result showed the prudence and necessity of departing secretly; otherwise, Laban might have detained him by violence or artifice. 18. **he carried the cattle of his getting** — *i. e.*, his own and nothing more. He did not indemnify himself for his many losses by carrying off any thing of Laban's, but was content with what Providence had given him. Some may think that due notice should have been given; but when a man feels himself in danger — the law of self-preservation prescribes the duty of immediate flight, if it can be done consistently with conscience.

**22-52. LABAN PURSUETH JACOB: THEIR COVENANT AT GALEED.**  
**22. it was told Laban on the third day**—No sooner did the intelligence reach Laban than he set out in pursuit, and he being not encumbered, advanced rapidly; whereas Jacob, with a young family and numerous flocks, had to march slowly, so that he overtook the fugitives after seven days' journey, as they lay encamped on the brow of Mount Gilead, an extensive range of hills forming the eastern boundary of Canaan. Being accompanied by a number of his people, he might have used violence had he not been Divinely warned in a dream to give no interruption to his nephew's journey. How striking and sudden a change! For several days he had been full of rage, and was now in eager anticipation that his vengeance would be fully wreaked, when lo! his hands are tied by invisible power (Psalm 76. 10). He durst not touch Jacob, so there was a war of words. **25-30. Laban said, What hast thou done?**—Not a word is said of the charge. 1. His reproaches were of a different kind. His first charge was for depriving him of the satisfaction of giving Jacob and his family the usual salutations at parting. In the East it is customary, when any are setting out to a great distance, for their relatives and friends to accompany them a considerable way with music and valedictory songs. Considering the past conduct of Laban, his complaint on this ground was hypocritical cant. But his second charge was a grave one—the carrying off his gods—*Hebrew*, Teraphim, small images of human figure, used not as idols or objects of worship, but as talismans, for superstitious purposes. **31, 32. Jacob said . . . With whomsoever thou findest thy gods let him not live**—Conscious of his own innocence, and little suspecting the misdeed of his favourite wife, he boldly challenged a search, and denounced the heaviest penalty on the culprit. A personal scrutiny was made by Laban, who examined every tent; and having entered Rachel's last, would have infallibly discovered the stolen images, had not Rachel made an appeal to him which prevented further search. **34. Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them**—The common pack-saddle is often used as a seat or a cushion, against which a person squatted on the floor may lean. **36, 37. -Jacob was wroth**—Recrimination on his part was natural in the circumstances, and, as usual, when passion is high, the charges took a wide range. He rapidly enumerated his grievances for twenty years, and in a tone of unrestrained severity described the niggard character and vexatious exactions of his uncle, together with the hardships of various kinds he had patiently endured. **38. the rams of thy flock have I not eaten**—Eastern people seldom kill the females for food except they are barren. **39. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee**—The shepherds are strictly responsible for losses in the flock, unless they can prove these were occasioned by wild beasts. **40. in the day the drought . . . and the frost by night**—The temperature changes often in twenty-four hours from the greatest extremes of heat and cold, most trying to the shepherd who has to keep watch by his flocks. Much allowance must be made for Jacob. Great and long-continued provocations ruffle

the mildest and most disciplined tempers. It is difficult to "be angry and sin not." But these two relatives, after having given utterance to their pent-up feelings, came at length to a mutual understanding, or rather, God influenced Laban to make reconciliation with his injured nephew (Proverbs, 16. 7). 44. **Come thou, let us make a covenant**—The way in which this covenant was ratified was by a heap of stones being laid in a circular pile, to serve as seats, and in the center of this circle a large one was set up perpendicularly for an altar. It is probable that a sacrifice was first offered, and then that the feast of reconciliation was partaken of by both parties seated on the stones around it. To this day heaps of stones, which have been used as memorials, are found abundantly in the region where this transaction took place. 52. **This heap be witness**—Objects of nature were frequently thus spoken of. But over and above, there was a solemn appeal to God; and it is observable that there was a marked difference in the religious sentiments of the two. Laban spake of the God of Abraham and Nahor, their common ancestors; but Jacob, knowing that idolatry had crept in among that branch of the family, swore by the Fear of Isaac. They who have one God should have one heart: they who are agreed in religion should endeavour to agree in every thing else.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

1, 2. VISION OF ANGELS. 1. **angels of God met him**—It is not said whether this angelic manifestation was made in a vision by day, or a dream by night. There is an evident allusion, however, to the appearance upon the ladder (Cf. ch. 28. 12), and this occurring to Jacob on his return to Canaan, was an encouraging pledge of the continued presence and protection of God (Psalm 34. 7; Hebrews, 1. 14). 2. **Mahanaim**—two hosts or camps. The place was situated between mount Gilead and the Jabbok—near the banks of that brook.

3-32. MISSION TO ESAU. 3. **Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau**—*i. e.*, had sent. It was a prudent precaution to ascertain the present temper of Esau, as the road, on approaching the eastern confines of Canaan, lay near the wild district where his brother was now established. **the land of Seir**—a highland country on the east and south of the Dead Sea, inhabited by the Horites, who were dispossessed by Esau, or his posterity (Deuteronomy, 11. 12). When, and in what circumstances he had emigrated thither—whether the separation arose out of the undutiful conduct and idolatrous habits of his wives, which had made them unwelcome inmates in the tent of his parents, or whether his roving disposition had sought a country from his love of adventure and the chase, he was living in a state of power and affluence, and this settlement on the outer borders of Canaan, though made of his own free-will—was overruled by Providence to pave the way for Jacob's return to the promised land. 4. **Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau**—The purport of the message was that, after a residence of twenty years in Mesopotamia, he was now returning to

his native land — that he did not need any thing, for he had abundance of pastoral wealth — but that he could not pass without notifying his arrival to his brother, and paying the homage of his respectful obeisance. Acts of civility tend to disarm opposition, and soften hatred (Ecclesiastes, 10. 4). **Thy servant Jacob** — He had been made *lord* over his brethren (Cf. ch. 27. 29). But it is probable he thought this referred to a spiritual superiority; or if to temporal, that it was to be realized only to his posterity. At all events, leaving it to God to fulfil that purpose, he deemed it prudent to assume the most kind and respectful bearing. 6. **The messengers returned to Jacob** — Their report left Jacob in painful uncertainty as to what was his brother's views and feelings. Esau's studied reserve gave him reason to dread the worst. Jacob was naturally timid; but his conscience told him that there was much ground for apprehension, and his distress was all the more aggravated that he had to provide for the safety of a large and helpless family. 9-12. **Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham** — In this great emergency he had recourse to prayer. This is the first recorded example of prayer in the Bible. It is short, earnest, and bearing directly on the occasion. The appeal is made to God, as standing in a covenant relation to his family, just as we ought to put our hopes of acceptance with God in Christ. It pleads the special promise, made to himself, of a safe return; and, after a most humble and affecting confession of unworthiness, breathes an earnest desire for deliverance from the impending danger. It was the prayer of a kind husband, an affectionate father, a firm believer in the promises. 13-23. **took . . . a present for Esau his brother** — Jacob combined active exertions with earnest prayer; and this teaches us that we must not depend upon the aid and interposition of God in such a way as to supersede the exercise of prudence and foresight. Superiors are always approached with presents, and the respect expressed is estimated by the quality and amount of the gift. The present of Jacob consisted of 550 head of cattle, of different kinds, such as would be most prized by Esau. It was a most magnificent present, skillfully arranged and proportioned. The milch camels alone were of immense value; for the she-camels form the principal part of Arab wealth; their milk is a chief article of diet, and, in many other respects, they are of the greatest use. 16. **every drove by themselves** — There was great prudence in this arrangement; for the present would thus have a more imposing appearance; Esau's passion would have time to cool as he passed each successive company, and, if the first was refused, the others would hasten back to convey a timely warning. 17. **he commanded the foremost** — The messengers were strictly commanded to say the same words, that Esau might be more impressed, and that the uniformity of the address might appear more clearly to have come from Jacob himself. 21. **himself lodged** — not the whole night, but only a part of it. 22. **ford Jabbok** — now the *Zerka* — a stream that rises among the mountains of Gilead, and, running from east to west, enters the Jordan about forty miles south of the sea of Tiberias. At the ford it is ten yards wide. It is sometimes forded with difficulty; but in summer, very shallow

**he rose up and took** — Unable to sleep, he waded the ford in the night-time by himself; and, having ascertained its safety, he returned to the north-bank, and sent over his family and attendants — remaining behind, to seek anew, in solitary prayer, the Divine blessing on the means he had set in motion. 24, 25. **There wrestled a man with him** — This mysterious person is called an angel (Hosea, 12. 5) and God (*v.* 28, 30; Hosea, 12. 4); and the opinion that is most supported is, that he was “the angel of the covenant,” who, in a visible form, appeared to animate the mind, and sympathise with the distress of his pious servant. It has been a subject of much discussion, whether the incident described was an actual conflict, or a visionary scene. Many think that, as the narrative makes no mention in express terms either of sleep, or dream, or vision, it was a real transaction; while others, considering the bodily exhaustion of Jacob, his great mental anxiety, the kind of aid he supplicated, as well as the analogy of former manifestations with which he was favoured — such as the ladder — have concluded that it was a vision. [CALVIN, HESSENBERG, HENGSTENBERG.] The moral design of it was to revive the sinking spirit of the patriarch, and to arm him with confidence in God, while anticipating the dreaded scenes of the morrow. To us it is highly instructive; showing that, to encourage us valiantly to meet the trials to which we are subjected, God allows us to ascribe to the efficacy of our faith and prayers, the victories which His grace alone enables us to make. 26. **I will not let thee go, except thou bless me** — It is evident that Jacob was aware of the character of him with whom he wrestled; and, believing that his power, though by far superior to human, was yet limited by his promise to do him good, he determined not to lose the golden opportunity of securing a blessing. And nothing gives God greater pleasure than to see the hearts of His people firmly adhering to Him. 28. **Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel** — The old name was not to be abandoned; but, referring as it did to a dishonourable part of the patriarch’s history — it was to be associated with another, descriptive of his now sanctified and eminently devout character. 29. **Jacob asked, Tell me . . . thy name** — The request was denied, that he might not be too elated with his conquest, nor suppose that he had obtained such advantage over the angel as to make him do what he pleased. 31. **halted upon his thigh** — As Paul had a thorn in the flesh given to humble him, lest he should be too elevated by the abundant revelations granted him; so Jacob’s lameness was to keep him mindful of this mysterious scene, and that it was in gracious condescension the victory was yielded to him. In the greatest of these spiritual victories, which, through faith, any of God’s people obtain, there is always something to humble them. 32. **the sinew which shrank** — the nerve that fastens the thigh-bone in its socket. The practice of the Jews in abstaining from eating this in the flesh of animals, is not founded on the law of Moses, but is merely a traditional usage. The sinew is carefully extracted; and where there are no persons skilled enough for that operation, they do not make use of the hind legs at all,

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

**1-11. KINDNESS OF JACOB AND ESAU.** I. **behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men**—Jacob having crossed the ford, and ranged his wives and children in order—the dearest last, that they might be the least exposed to danger—awaited the expected interview. His faith was strengthened and his fears gone (Psalm 27. 3). Having had power to prevail with God, he was confident of the same power with man according to the promise (Cf. ch. 32. 28). 3. **he bowed himself . . . seven times**—The manner of doing this is by looking towards a superior and bowing with the upper part of the body brought parallel to the ground, then advancing a few steps and bowing again, and repeating this obeisance till, at the seventh time, the suppliant stands in the immediate presence of his superior. The members of his family did the same. This was a token of profound respect, and, though very marked, it would appear natural; for Esau, being the elder brother, was, according to the custom of the East, entitled to respectful treatment from his younger brother. His attendants would be struck by it, and, according to Eastern habits, would magnify it in the hearing of their master. 4. **Esau ran to meet him**—What a sudden and surprising change? Whether the sight of the princely present and the profound homage of Jacob had produced this effect, or it proceeded from the impulsive character of Esau, the cherished enmity of twenty years in a moment disappeared; the weapons of war were laid aside, and the warmest tokens of mutual affection reciprocated between the brothers. But, doubtless, the efficient cause was the secret, subduing influence of grace (Proverbs, 21. 1), which converted Esau from an enemy into a friend. 5. **Who are those with thee?**—It might have been enough to say, They are my children; but Jacob was a pious man, and he could not give even a common answer but in the language of piety (Psalm 127. 3; 113. 9; 107. 41). II. **He urged him, and he took it**—In the East the acceptance of a present by a superior is a proof of friendship, and by an enemy of reconciliation. It was on both accounts Jacob was so anxious that his brother should receive the cattle; and in Esau's acceptance he had the strongest proofs of a good feeling being established that Eastern notions admit of.

**12-20. THE PARTING.** 12. **And he said, Let us take our journey**—Esau proposed to accompany Jacob and his family through the country, both as a mark of friendship and as an escort to guard them. But the proposal was prudently declined. Jacob did not need any worldly state or equipage. Notwithstanding the present cordiality, the brothers were so different in spirit, character and habits—the one so much a man of the world, and the other a man of God, that there was great risk of something occurring to disturb the harmony. Jacob having alleged a very reasonable excuse for the tardiness of his movements, the brothers parted in peace. 14. **until I come unto my lord**—It seems to have been Jacob's intention, passing round the Dead Sea, to visit his brother in Seir, and



thus, without crossing the Jordan, go to Beer-sheba to Isaac ; but he changed his plan, and whether the intention was carried out then or at a future period has not been recorded. 17. **Jacob journeyed to Succoth** — *i. e.*, booths, that being the first station at which Jacob halted on his arrival in Canaan. His posterity, when dwelling in houses of stone, built a city there and called it Succoth, to commemorate the fact that their ancestor, "a Syrian ready to perish," was glad to dwell in booths. 18. **Shalem** — *i. e.*, peace ; and the meaning may be that Jacob came into Canaan, arriving safe and sound at the city of Shechem — a tribute to Him who had promised such a return (Cf. ch. 28. 15). But most writers take Shalem as a proper name — a city of Shechem, and the site is marked by one of the little villages about two miles to the north-east. A little further in the valley below Shechem "he bought a parcel of a field, where he spread his tent," thus being the first of the patriarchs who became a proprietor of land in Canaan. 19. **an hundred pieces of money** — pieces, *lit.*, "lambs ;" probably a coin with the figure of a lamb on it. 20. **and he erected . . . an altar** — A beautiful proof of his personal piety, a most suitable conclusion to his journey, and a lasting memorial of a distinguished favour in the name "God, the God of Israel." Wherever we pitch a tent God should have an altar.

## 2342 CHAPTER XXXIV.

**1-31. THE DISHONOUR OF DINAH.** 1-4. Though freed from foreign troubles, Jacob met with a great domestic calamity in the fall of his only daughter. According to Josephus, she had been attending a festival ; but it is highly probable that she had been often and freely mixing in the society of the place, and that being a simple, inexperienced and vain young woman, had been flattered by the attentions of the ruler's son. There must have been time and opportunities of acquaintance to produce the strong attachment that Shechem had for her. 5. **Jacob held his peace** — Jacob, as a father and a good man, must have been deeply distressed. But he could do little. In the case of a family by different wives, it is not the father, but the full brothers, on whom the protection of the daughters devolves — they are the guardians of a sister's welfare and the avengers of her wrongs. It was for this reason that Simeon and Levi, the two brothers of Dinah by Leah, appear the chief actors in this episode ; and though the two fathers would have probably brought about an amicable arrangement of the affair, the hasty arrival of these enraged brothers introduced a new element into the negotiations. 6. **Hamor** — *i. e.*, ass ; and it is a striking proof of the very different ideas which, in the East, are associated with that animal, which there appears sprightly, well proportioned, and of great activity. This chief is called Emmor (Acts, 7. 16). 7. **the men were grieved, and . . . very wroth** — Good men in such a case could not but grieve ; but it would have been well if their anger had been less, or that they had known the precept "let not the sun go down upon your wrath." No injury

can justify revenge (Deuteronomy, 32. 35 ; Romans, 12. 9) ; but Jacob's sons planned a scheme of revenge in the most deceitful manner. 8. **Hamor communed with them**—The prince and his son seem at first sight to have acted honestly, and our feelings are enlisted on their side. They betray no jealousy of the powerful shepherds ; on the contrary, show every desire to establish friendly intercourse. But their conduct was unjustifiable in neither expressing regret nor restoring Dinah to her family ; and this great error was the true cause of the negotiations ending in so unhappy a manner. 11. **Shechem said unto her father . . . and brethren**—The consideration of the proposal for marriage belonged to Jacob, and he certainly showed great weakness in yielding so much to the fiery impetuosity of his sons. The sequel shows the unhappy consequences of that concession. 12. **Ask me never so much dowry and gift**—The gift refers to the presents made at betrothal, both to the bride elect and her relations (Cf. ch. 24. 53) ; the dowry to a suitable settlement upon her. 13. **The sons of Jacob answered**—The honour of their family consisted in having the sign of the covenant. Circumcision was the external rite by which persons were admitted members of the ancient church. But that outward rite could not make the Shechemites true Israelites ; and yet it does not appear that Jacob's sons required any thing more. Nothing is said of their teaching the people to worship the true God, but only of their insisting on their being circumcised ; and it is evident that they did not seek to convert Shechem, but only made a show of religion—a cloak to cover their diabolical design. Hypocrisy and deceit, in all cases vicious, are infinitely more so when accompanied with a show of religion ; and here the sons of Jacob, under the pretense of conscientious scruples, conceal a scheme of treachery as cruel and diabolical as was, perhaps, ever perpetrated. 20. **Hamor and Shechem . . . came unto the gate of their city**—That was the place where every public communication was made ; and in the ready obsequious submission of the people to this measure we see an evidence either of the extraordinary affection for the governing family, or of the abject despotism of the East, where the will of a chief is an absolute command. 30. **Jacob said . . . Ye have troubled me**—This atrocious outrage perpetrated on the defenseless citizens and their families made the cup of Jacob's affliction overflow. We may wonder that, in speaking of it to his sons, he did not represent it as a heinous sin—an atrocious violation of the laws of God and man, but dwelt solely on the present consequences. It was probably because that was the only view likely to rouse the cold-blooded apathy, the hardened consciences of those ruffian sons. Nothing but the restraining power of God saved him and his family from the united vengeance of the people (Cf. ch. 35. 5). All his sons had not been engaged in the massacre. Joseph was a boy, Benjamin not yet born, and the other eight not concerned in it. Simeon and Levi alone, with their retainers, had been the guilty actors in the bloody tragedy. But the Canaanites would not be discriminating in their vengeance ; and if *all* the Shechemites were put to death for the offense of their chief's son, what wonder if the natives should extend their hatred to all the

family of Jacob ; and who, probably, equaled, in number, the inhabitants of that village.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

**1-15. REMOVAL TO BETHEL.** 1. **God said unto Jacob, Arise, &c.** — This command was given as seasonably in point of time, as tenderly in respect of language. The disgraceful and perilous events that had recently taken place in the patriarch's family must have produced in him a strong desire to remove without delay from the vicinity of Shechem. Borne down by an overwhelming sense of the criminality of his two sons — of the offense they had given to God, and the dishonour they had brought on the true faith ; distracted, too, with anxiety, about the probable consequences which their outrage might bring upon himself and family, should the Canaanite people combine to extirpate such a band of robbers and murderers ; he must have felt this call as affording a great relief to his afflicted feelings. At the same time it conveyed a tender rebuke. **go up to Bethel** — Bethel was about thirty miles south of Shechem ; and was an ascent from a low to a high-land country. There, he would not only be released from the painful associations of the latter place, but be established on a spot that would revive the most delightful and sublime recollections. The pleasure of revisiting it, however, was not altogether unalloyed. **make there an altar unto God, that appeared** — It too frequently happens that early impressions are effaced through lapse of time — that promises made in seasons of distress, are forgotten ; or, if remembered on the return of health and prosperity, there is not the same alacrity and sense of obligation felt to fulfill them. Jacob was lying under that charge. He had fallen into spiritual indolence. It was now eight or ten years since his return to Canaan. He had effected a comfortable settlement, and had acknowledged the Divine mercies, by which that return and settlement had been signally distinguished (Cf. ch. 33. 19). But for some unrecorded reason, his early vow at Bethel, in a great crisis of his life, remained unperformed. The Lord appeared now to remind him of his neglected duty, in terms, however, so mild, as awakened less the memory of his fault, than of the kindness of his heavenly Guardian ; and how much Jacob felt the touching nature of the appeal to that memorable scene at Bethel, appears in the immediate preparations he made to *arise* and *go up* thither (Psalm 66. 13). 2. **Then Jacob said unto his household . . . Put away the strange gods that are among you** — *Hebrew*, gods of the stranger — of foreign nations. Jacob had brought, in his service, a number of Mesopotamian retainers, who were addicted to superstitious practices ; and there is some reason to fear that the same high testimony as to the religious superintendence of his household could not have been borne of him as was done of Abraham (ch. 18. 19). He might have been too negligent hitherto in winking at these evils in his servants ; or, perhaps, it was not till his arrival in Canaan, that he had learnt, for the first time,

that one nearer and dearer to him was secretly infected with the same corruption (ch. 31. 34). Be that as it may, he resolved on an immediate and thorough reformation of his household; and in commanding them to put away the strange gods, he added, "be clean, and change your garments;" as if some defilement, from contact with idolatry, should still remain about them. In the law of Moses, many ceremonial purifications were ordained, and observed by persons who had contracted certain defilements, and without the observance of which, they were reckoned unclean and unfit to join in the social worship of God. These bodily purifications were purely figurative; and as sacrifices were offered before the law, so also were external purifications, as appears from the words of Jacob; hence it would seem that types and symbols were used from the fall of man, representing and teaching the two great doctrines of revealed truth — *viz.*, the atonement of Christ, and the sanctification of our nature. 4. **they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods . . . and earrings** — Strange gods — the Teraphim (Cf. ch. 31. 30), as well, perhaps, as other idols got amongst the Shechemite spoil — earrings of various forms, sizes, and materials, which are universally worn in the East, and, then as now, connected with incantation and idolatry (Cf. Hosea, 2. 13). The decided tone which Jacob now assumed, was the probable cause of the alacrity with which those favourite objects of superstition were surrendered. **Jacob hid them under the oak** — or terebinth — a towering tree, which, like all others of the kind, were striking objects in the scenery of Palestine; and beneath which, at Schechem, the patriarch had pitched his tent. He hid the images and amulets, delivered to him by his Mesopotamian dependents, at the root of this tree. The oak being deemed a consecrated tree, to bury them at its root was to deposit them in a place where no bold hand would venture to disturb the ground; and hence it was called from this circumstance — "the plain of Meonenim" — *i. e.*, the oak of enchantments (Judges, 9. 37); and from the great stone which Joshua set up — "the oak of the pillar" (Judges, 9. 6). 5. **the terror of God was upon the cities** — There was every reason to apprehend that a storm of indignation would burst from all quarters upon Jacob's family, and that the Canaanite tribes would have formed one united plan of revenge. But a supernatural panic seized them; and thus, for the sake of the "heir of the promise," the protecting shield of Providence was specially held over his family. 6. **So Jacob came to Luz . . . that is, Beth-el** — It is probable that this place was unoccupied ground when Jacob first went to it; and that after that period [CALVIN], the Canaanites built a town, to which they gave the name of Luz, from the profusion of almond trees that grew around. The name of Bethel, which would, of course, be confined to Jacob and his family, did not supersede the original one till long after. It is now identified with the modern Beitin, and lies on the western slope of the mountain on which Abraham built his altar (Genesis, 12. 8). 7. **El-Beth-el** — *i. e.*, the God of Bethel. 8. **Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died** — This event seems to have taken place before the solemnities were commenced. Deborah — a bee — supposing her to have been fifty years on com-

ing to Canaan, she had attained the great age of 180. When she was removed from Isaac's household to Jacob's is unknown; but it probably was on his return from Mesopotamia; and she would have been of invaluable service to his young family. Old nurses, like her, were not only honoured, but loved as mothers; and, accordingly, her death was the occasion of so great lamentation. She was buried under *the oak*—hence called the “the terebinth of tears” (Cf. 1 Kings, 13. 14). God was pleased to make a new appearance to him after the solemn rites of devotion were over. By this manifestation of his presence, God testified his acceptance of Jacob's sacrifice, renewed the promise of the blessings guaranteed to Abraham and Isaac; and the patriarch observed the ceremony with which he had formerly consecrated the place; comprising a sacramental cup, along with the oil that he poured on the pillar, and re-imposing the memorable name. The whole scene was in accordance with the character of the patriarchal dispensation, in which the great truths of religion were exhibited to the senses, and “the world's grey fathers” taught in a manner suited to the weakness of an infantine condition. 13. **God went up from him**—The presence of God was indicated in some visible form, and his acceptance of the sacrifice shown by the miraculous descent of fire from heaven, consuming it on the altar.

16-27. **BIRTH OF BENJAMIN—DEATH OF RACHEL, &c.** 16. **they journeyed from Beth-el**—There can be no doubt that much enjoyment was experienced at Bethel, and that, in the religious observances solemnized, as well as in the vivid recollections of the glorious vision seen there, the affections of the patriarch were powerfully animated, and that he left the place a better and more devoted servant of God. When the solemnities were over, Jacob, with his family, pursued a route directly southward, and they reached Ephrath, when they were plunged into mourning by the death of Rachel, who sank in child-birth, leaving a posthumous son. A very affecting death, considering how ardently the mind of Rachel had been set on offspring (Cf. ch. 30. 1). 18. **she called his name Ben-oni**—The dying mother gave this name to her child, significant of her circumstances; but Jacob changed it into Benjamin. This is thought, by some, to have been originally Benjamin, “a son of days”—*i. e.*, of old age; but, with its present ending, it means “son of the right hand”—*i. e.*, particularly dear and precious. 19. **Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem**—The one the old, the other the later name, signifying “house of bread.” 20. **and Jacob set a pillar on her grave . . . unto this day**—The spot still marked out as the grave of Rachel exactly agrees with the Scripture record, being about a mile from Bethlehem. Anciently it was surmounted by a pyramid of stones, but the present tomb is a Mohammedan erection. 22-26. **Sons of Jacob . . . born to him in Padan-aram**—It is a common practice of the sacred historian to say of a company or body of men that which, though true of the majority, may not be applicable to every individual. See Matthew, 19. 28; John, 20. 24; Hebrews, 11. 13. Here is an example, for Benjamin was born in Canaan.

28, 29. **DEATH OF ISAAC.** 29. **Isaac gave up the ghost**—The

death of this venerable patriarch is here recorded by anticipation, for it did not take place till fifteen years after Joseph's disappearance. Feeble and blind though he was, he lived to a very advanced age; and it is a pleasing evidence of the permanent reconciliation between Esau and Jacob, that they met at Mamre to perform the funeral rites of their common father.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

**1-43. POSTERITY OF ESAU. I. these are the generations—** history of the leading men and events (Cf. ch. 2. 4). **Esau who is Edom—** A name applied to him in reference to the peculiar colour of his skin at birth, rendered more significant by his inordinate craving for the *red* pottage, and also by the fierce sanguinary character of his descendants (Cf. Ezekiel, 25. 12; Obadiah, 10). **2, 3. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan—** There were three, mentioned under different names; for it is evident that Bashemath is the same as Mahalath (ch. 28. 9), since they both stand in the relation of daughter to Ishmael and sister to Nebajoth; and hence it may be inferred that Adah is the same as Judith, Aholibamah as Bathsemath (ch. 26. 34). It was not unusual for women, in that early age, to have two names, as Sarai was also Iscah; and this is the more probable in the case of Esau's wives, who, of course, would have to take new names when they went from Canaan to settle in Mount Seir. **6, 7. Esau . . . went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob—***lit.*, a country, without any certain prospect of a settlement. The design of this historical sketch of Esau and his family is to show how the promise (ch. 27. 39, 40) was fulfilled. In temporal prosperity he far exceeds his brother; and it is remarkable that, in the overruling providence of God, the vast increase of his worldly substance was the occasion of his leaving Canaan, and thus making way for the return of Jacob. **8. Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir—** This was Divinely assigned as his possession (Joshua, 24. 4; Deuteronomy, 2. 5). **15-19. dukes—** The Edomites, like the Israelites, were divided into tribes, which took their names from his sons. The head of each tribe was called by a term which in our version is rendered "duke"—not of the high rank and wealth of a British peer, but like the sheiks or emirs of the modern East, or the chieftains of our highland clans. Fourteen are mentioned who flourished contemporaneously. **20-30. Sons of Seir, the Horite—** native dukes, who were incorporated with those of the Edomite race. **24. This was that Anah that found the mules—** The word "mules" is, in several ancient versions, rendered "water springs;" and this discovery of some remarkable fountain was sufficient, among a wandering or pastoral people, to entitle him to such a distinguishing notice. **31-39. kings of Edom—** The royal power was not built on the ruins of the dukedoms, but existed at the same time. **40-43. Recapitulation of the dukes according to their residences.**

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

**1-4. PARENTAL PARTIALITY.** 1. **Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger**—*i. e.*, sojourner: father used collectively. The patriarch was at this time at Mamre, in the valley of Hebron (Cf. ch. 35. 27); and his dwelling there was continued in the same manner, and prompted by the same motives as that of Abraham and Isaac (Hebrews, II. 13). 2. **generations**—leading occurrences, in the domestic history of Jacob, as shown in the narrative about to be commenced. **Joseph . . . was feeding the flock**—*lit.*, Joseph being seventeen years old was a shepherd over the flock—he a lad, with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Oversight or superintendence is evidently implied. This post of chief shepherd in the party might be assigned him either from his being the son of a principal wife, or from his own superior qualities of character; and if invested with this office, he acted not as a gossiping tell-tale, but as “a faithful steward” in reporting the scandalous conduct of his brethren. 3. **son of his old age**—Benjamin being younger, was more the son of his old age, and consequently on that ground might have been expected to be the favourite. Literally rendered, it is “son of old age to him”—*Hebrew* phrase, for “a wise son”—one who possessed observation and wisdom above his years—an old head on young shoulders. **made him a coat of many colours**—formed in those early days by sewing together patches of coloured cloth, and considered a dress of distinction (Judges, 5. 30; 2 Samuel, 13. 18). The passion for various colours still reigns amongst the Arabs and other people of the East, who are fond of dressing their children in this gaudy attire. But since the art of interweaving various patterns was introduced, “the coats of colours” are different now from what they seem to have been in patriarchal times, and bear a close resemblance to the varieties of tartan. 4. **could not speak peaceably unto him**—did not say “peace be to thee,” the usual expression of good wishes amongst friends and acquaintances. It is deemed a sacred duty to give all this form of salutation; and the withholding of it is an unmistakable sign of dislike or secret hostility. The habitual refusal of Joseph’s brethren, therefore, to meet him with “the *salaam*,” showed how ill-disposed they were towards him. It is very natural in parents to love the youngest, and feel partial to those who excel in talents or amiableness. But in a family constituted as Jacob’s—many children by different mothers—he showed great and criminal indiscretion.

**5-36. THE DREAMS OF JOSEPH.** 5. **Joseph dreamed a dream**—Dreams in ancient times were much attended to, and hence the dream of Joseph, though but a mere boy, engaged the serious consideration of his family. But his dream was evidently symbolical. The meaning was easily discerned, and, from its being repeated under different emblems, the fulfilment was considered certain (Cf. ch. 41. 32)—whence it was that “his brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying.” 12. **his brethren went to feed their father’s flock in Shechem**—The vale of Shechem was, from the

earliest mention of Canaan, blest with extraordinary abundance of water. Therefore did the sons of Jacob go from Hebron to this place, though it must have cost them near twenty hours' travelling — *i. e.*, at the shepherd rate, a little more than fifty miles. But the herbage there is so rich and nutritious, that they thought it well worth the pains of so long a journey, to the neglect of the grazing district of Hebron. [VAN DE VELDE.] 13-17. **Israel said, . . . Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem?** — Anxious to learn how his sons were doing in their distant encampment, Jacob dispatched Joseph; and the youth accepting the mission with alacrity, left the vale of Hebron — sought them at Shechem — heard of them from a man in "the field," the wide and richly-cultivated plain of Esdraelon — and found that they had left that neighbourhood for Dothan, probably being compelled by the detestation in which, from the horrid massacre, their name was held. **Joseph went after his brethren and found them in Dothan** — *Hebrew*, Dothaim, or "two wells," recently discovered in the modern "Dotan," situated a few hours' distance from Shechem. 18. **when they saw him afar off** — on the level grass-field, where they were watching their cattle, they could perceive him approaching in the distance from the side of Shechem, or rather Samaria. 19. **Behold, this dreamer cometh** — *lit.*, "master of dreams" — a bitterly ironical sneer. Dreams being considered suggestions from above, to make false pretensions to having received one was detested as a species of blasphemy, and in this light Joseph was regarded by his brethren as an artful pretender. They already began to form a plot for his assassination, from which he was rescued only by the address of Reuben, who suggested that he should rather be cast into one of the wells, which are, and probably were, completely dried up in summer. 23. **they stripped Joseph out of his coat . . . of many colours** — Imagine him advancing in all the unsuspecting openness of brotherly affection. How astonished and terrified must he have been at the cold reception, the ferocious aspect, the rough usage of his unnatural assailants! A vivid picture of his state of agony and despair was afterward drawn by themselves (Cf. ch. 42. 21). 25. **they sat down to eat bread** — What a view does this exhibit of those hardened profligates! Their common share in this conspiracy is not the only dismal feature in the story. The rapidity, the almost instantaneous manner in which the proposal was followed by their joint resolution, and the cool indifference, or rather the fiendish satisfaction, with which they sat down to regale themselves is astonishing. It is impossible that mere envy at his dreams, his gaudy dress, or the doating partiality of their common father, could have goaded them on to such a pitch of frenzied resentment, or confirmed them in such consummate wickedness. Their hatred to Joseph must have had a far deeper seat — must have been produced by dislike to his piety and other excellencies, which made his character and conduct a constant censure upon theirs, and on account of which they found that they could never be at ease till they had rid themselves of his hated presence. This was the true solution of the mystery, just as it was in the case of Cain (1 John, 3. 12). **they lifted up their eyes . . . and,**



**behold, a company of Ishmaelites**—they are called Midianites (*v.* 28) and Medanites, *Hebrew* (*v.* 36), being a traveling caravan composed of a mixed association of Arabians. Those tribes of northern Arabia had already addicted themselves to commerce, and long did they enjoy a monopoly, the carrying trade being entirely in their hands. Their approach could easily be seen; for as their road, after crossing the ford from the transjordanic district, led along the south side of the mountains of Gilboa, a party seated on the plain of Dothan could trace them and their string of camels in the distance as they proceeded through the broad and gently-sloping valley that intervenes. Trading in the produce of Arabia and India, they were in the regular course of traffic on their way to Egypt: and the chief articles of commerce in which this clan dealt, were “spicery” from India, *i. e.*, a species of resinous gum, called *storax*, “balm of Gilead,” the juice of the balsam tree, a native of Arabia-Felix, and “myrrh,” an Arabic gum of a strong fragrant smell. For these articles there must have been an enormous demand in Egypt, as they were constantly used in the process of embalmment. 26-28. **Judah said . . . what profit is it if we slay our brother?**—The sight of these traveling merchants gave a sudden turn to the views of the conspirators; for having no wish to commit a greater degree of crime than was necessary for the accomplishment of their end, they readily approved of Judah’s suggestion to dispose of their obnoxious brother as a slave. The proposal, of course, was founded on their knowledge that the Arabian merchants trafficked in slaves; and there is the clearest evidence furnished by the monuments of Egypt, that the traders who were in the habit of bringing slaves from the countries through which they passed, found a ready market in the cities of the Nile. **they lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold him**—Acting impulsively on Judah’s advice, they had their poor victim ready by the time the merchants reached; and money being no part of their object, they sold him for “twenty pieces of silver.” The money was probably in rings or pieces (shekels), and silver is always mentioned in the records of that early age before gold, on account of its rarity. The whole sum, if in shekel weight, did not exceed £3. **they brought Joseph into Egypt**—there were two routes to Egypt—the one was overland by Hebron, where Jacob dwelt, and by taking which, the fate of his hapless son would likely have reached the paternal ears: the other was directly westward across the country from Dothan to the maritime coast, and in this, the safest and most expeditious way, the merchants carried Joseph to Egypt. Thus did an overruling Providence lead this murderous conclave of brothers, as well as the slave-merchants, — both following their own free courses, to be parties in an act by which He was to work out, in a marvellous manner, the great purposes of His wisdom and goodness toward His ancient Church and people. 29, 30. **Reuben returned unto the pit**—he seems to have designedly taken a circuitous route, with a view of secretly rescuing the poor lad from a lingering death by starvation. His intentions were excellent, and his feelings no doubt painfully lacerated, when he discovered what had been done in his absence. But the thing

was of God, who had designed that Joseph's deliverance should be accomplished by other means than his. 31-33. **they took Joseph's coat**—the commission of one sin necessarily leads to another to conceal it; and the scheme of deception which the sons of Jacob planned and practiced on their aged father was a necessary consequence of the atrocious crime they had perpetrated. What a wonder that their cruel sneer, "thy son's coat," and their forced efforts to comfort him, did not awaken suspicion! But extreme grief, like every other passion, is blind, and Jacob, great as his affliction was, did allow himself to indulge his sorrow more than became one who believed in the government of a supreme and all-wise Disposer. 34. **Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins**—the common signs of Oriental mourning. A rent is made in the skirt more or less long according to the afflicted feelings of the mourner, and a coarse, rough piece of black sackcloth or camel's hair cloth is wound round the waist. 35. **and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son**—not the earth, for Joseph was supposed to be torn in pieces, but the unknown place—the place of departed souls, where Jacob expected at death to meet his beloved son.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

**1-30. JUDAH AND FAMILY.** 1. **at that time**—a formula frequently used by the sacred writers, not to describe any precise period, but an interval near about it. 2. **Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite**—Like Esau, this son of Jacob, casting off the restraints of religion, married into a Canaanite family; and it is not surprising that the family which sprang from such an unsuitable connection should be infamous for bold and unblushing wickedness. 8. **Judah said unto Onan . . . marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother**—The first instance of a custom which was afterwards incorporated amongst the laws of Moses, that when a husband died leaving a widow, his brother next of age was to marry her, and the issue, if any, was to be served heir to the deceased (Cf. Deuteronomy, 25. 5). 12. **Judah . . . went up unto his sheep-shearers**—This season, which occurs in Palestine towards the end of March, was spent in more than usual hilarity, and the wealthier masters invited their friends, as well as treated their servants, to sumptuous entertainments. Accordingly, it is said, Judah was accompanied by his friend Hirah. **Timnath**—in the mountains of Judah. 18. **signet, &c.**—bracelets, including armllets, were worn by men as well as women among the Hebrews. But the *Hebrew* word here rendered bracelets, is everywhere else translated "lace" or "ribbon;" so that as the signet alone was probably more than an equivalent for the kid, it is not easy to conjecture why the other things were given in addition, except by supposing the perforated seal was attached by a ribbon to the staff. 24. **Bring her forth, and let her be burnt**—In patriarchal times fathers seem to have possessed the power of life and death over the members of their families. The crime of adultery was an-

ciently punished in many places by burning (Leviticus, 21. 9; Judges, 15. 6; Jeremiah, 29. 22). This chapter contains details which probably would never have obtained a place in the inspired record, had it not been to exhibit the full links of the chain that connects the genealogy of the Saviour with Abraham; and in the disreputable character of the ancestry who figure in this passage, we have a remarkable proof that "He made himself of no reputation."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

**1-23. JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE.** 1. **Potiphar**— This name, Potiphar, signifies one "devoted to the sun," the local deity of On or Heliopolis,—a circumstance which fixes the place of his residence in the Delta, the district of Egypt bordering on Canaan. **officer**—*lit.*, prince of Pharaoh—*i. e.*, in the service of government. **captain of the guard**—The import of the original term has been variously interpreted, some considering it means "chief cook," others, "chief inspector of plantations;" but that which seems best founded is "chief of the executioners," "head of the police," the same as the captain of the watch, the *zabut* of modern Egypt. [WILKINSON.] **bought him . . . of the Ishmaelites**—The age, appearance, and intelligence of the Hebrew slave would soon make him be picked up in the market. But the unseen, unfelt influence of the great Disposer drew the attention of Potiphar towards him, in order that in the house of one so closely connected with the court, he might receive that previous training which was necessary for the high office he was destined to fill, and in the school of adversity learn the lessons of practical wisdom that were to be of greatest utility and importance in his future career. Thus it is, that when God has any important work to be done, He always prepares fitting agents to accomplish it. 2. **he was in the house of his master**—Those slaves who had been war captives were generally sent to labour in the field, and subjected to hard treatment under the "stick" of taskmasters. But those who were bought with money were employed in domestic purposes, were kindly treated, and enjoyed as much liberty as the same class does in modern Egypt. 3. **his master saw that the Lord was with him**—Though changed in condition, Joseph was not changed in spirit; though stripped of the gaudy coat that had adorned his person, he had not lost the moral graces that distinguished his character; though separated from his father on earth, he still lived in communion with his Father in heaven; though in the house of an idolator, he continued a worshipper of the true God. 5. **the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, &c.**—It might be—it probably was that a special, a miraculous blessing was poured out on a youth, who so faithfully and zealously served God amid all the disadvantages of his place. But it may be useful to remark that such a blessing usually follows in the ordinary course of things; and the most worldly unprincipled masters always admire and respect religion in a servant when they see that profession supported by conscientious principle and a consistent life. **made**

him overseer in his house — We do not know in what capacity Joseph entered into the service of Potiphar; but the observant eye of his master soon discovered his superior qualities, and made him his chief, his confidential servant (Cf. Ephesians, 6. 7; Colossians, 3. 23). The advancement of domestic slaves is not uncommon, and it is considered a great disgrace not to raise one who has been a year or two in the family. But this extraordinary advancement of Joseph was the doing of the Lord, though on the part of Potiphar it was the consequence of observing the astonishing prosperity that attended him in all that he did. 7. **his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph** — Egyptian women were not kept in the same secluded manner as females are in most Oriental countries now. They were treated in a manner more worthy of a civilized people — in fact, enjoyed as much freedom both at home and abroad as ladies do in Britain. Hence Potiphar's wife had constant opportunity of meeting Joseph. But the ancient women of Egypt were very loose in their morals. Intrigues and intemperance were vices very prevalent amongst the sex, as the monuments too plainly attest. [WILKINSON.] Potiphar's wife was probably not worse than many of the same rank, and her infamous advances made to Joseph arose from her superiority of station. 9. **How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?** — This remonstrance, when all inferior arguments had failed, embodied the true principles of moral purity — a principle always sufficient where it exists, and alone sufficient. 14. **Then she called unto the men of her house** — Disappointed and affronted, she vowed revenge, and accused Joseph, first to the servants of the house, and, on his return, to her lord. **See, he hath brought in a Hebrew, . . . to mock us** — an affected and blind aspersion of her husband for keeping in his house an Hebrew, the very abomination of Egyptians. 20. **Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison** — the round house, from the form of its construction, usually attached to the dwelling of such an officer as Potiphar. It was partly a subterranean dungeon (ch. 41. 14), though the brick-built walls rose considerably above the surface of the ground, and were surmounted by a vaulted roof somewhat in the form of an inverted bowl. Into such a dungeon Potiphar, in the first ebullition of rage, threw Joseph, and ordered him to be subjected further to as great harshness of treatment (Psalm 105. 18) as he durst; for the power of masters over their slaves was very properly restrained by law, and the murder of a slave was a capital crime. **a place where the king's prisoners were bound** — Though prisons seem to have been an inseparable appendage of the palaces, this was not a common jail — it was the receptacle of state criminals; and, therefore, it may be presumed that more than ordinary strictness and vigilance were exercised over the prisoners. In general, however, the Egyptian, like other Oriental prisons, were used solely for the purposes of detention. Accused persons were cast into them until the charges against them could be investigated; and though the jailor was responsible for the appearance of those placed under his custody, yet, provided they were produced when called, he was never interrogated as to the way in which he had kept them. 21-22.

**The Lord . . . gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison, &c.**—It is highly probable, from the situation of this prison (ch. 40. 3), that the keeper might have been previously acquainted with Joseph, and have had access to know his innocence of the crime laid to his charge as well as with all the high integrity of his character. That may partly account for his showing so much kindness and confidence to his prisoner. But there was a higher influence at work ; for “the Lord was with Joseph, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.”

## CHAPTER XL.

**1-8. TWO STATE PRISONERS. 1. the butler**—not only the cup-bearer, but overseer of the royal vineyards, as well as the cellars ; having, probably, some hundreds of people under him. **baker**—or cook, had the superintendence of every thing relating to the providing and preparing of meats for the royal table. Both officers, especially the former, were, in ancient Egypt, always persons of great rank and importance ; and, from the confidential nature of their employment, as well as their access to the royal presence, they were, generally, the highest nobles or princes of the blood. **3. Pharaoh put them in ward, &c.**—Whatever was their crime, they were committed—until their case could be investigated—to the custody of the captain of the guard, *i. e.*, Potiphar. in an outer part of whose house the royal prison was situated. **4. The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them**—not the keeper, though he was most favourably disposed ; but Potiphar himself, who, it would seem, was by this time satisfied of the perfect innocence of the young Hebrew, though, probably, to prevent the exposure of his family, he deemed it prudent to detain him in confinement (see Psalm 37. 5). **They continued a season in ward—lit., days**—how long, is uncertain ; but, as they were called to account on the king’s birth-day, it has been supposed that their offense had been committed on the preceding anniversary. [CALVIN.] **5-8. they dreamed a dream**—Joseph, influenced by the spirit of true religion, could feel for others (Ecclesiastes, 4. 1 ; Romans, 12. 15 ; Phillippians, 2. 4). Observing them one day extremely depressed, he inquired the cause of their melancholy ; and, being informed it was owing to a dream they had respectively dreamed during the previous night, after piously directing them to God (Daniel, 2. 30 ; Isaiah, 26. 10), he volunteered to aid them, through the Divine help, in discovering the import of their vision. The influence of Providence must be seen in the remarkable fact of both officers dreaming such dreams in one night. He moveth the spirits of men.

**9-16. THE BUTLER’S DREAM. 9. In my dream, behold, a vine was before me**—The visionary scene described, seems to represent the king as abroad, taking exercise, and attended by his butler who gave him a cooling draught. On all occasions, the kings of ancient Egypt were required to practice temperance in the use of wine [WILKINSON] ; but in this scene, it is a prepared beverage he

is drinking, probably the sherbet of the present day. Every thing was done in the king's presence—the cup was washed, the juice of the grapes pressed into it; and it was then handed to him—not grasped; but lightly resting on the tips of the fingers. 12-15. **Joseph said, . . . This is the interpretation**—Speaking as an inspired interpreter, he told the butler that within three days he would be restored to all the honours and privileges of his office; and while making that joyful announcement, earnestly bespoke the officer's influence for his own liberation. Nothing has hitherto met us in the record indicative of Joseph's feelings; but this earnest appeal reveals a sadness and impatient longing for release, which not all his piety and faith in God could dispel.

**16-23. THE BAKER'S DREAM.** 16. **I had three white baskets**—The circumstances mentioned exactly describe his duties, which, notwithstanding numerous assistants, he performed with his own hands. **white**—*lit.*, full of holes—*i. e.*, wicker baskets. The meats were carried to table upon the head in three baskets, one piled upon the other; and in the uppermost, the bakemeats. And in crossing the open courts, from the kitchen to the dining-rooms, the abstraction of the viands by a vulture, eagle, Ibis, or other rapacious bird, was a frequent occurrence in the palaces of Egypt, as it is an every day incident in the hot countries of the East still. The risk from these carnivorous birds was the greater in the cities of Egypt, that being held sacred, it was unlawful to destroy them; and they swarmed in such numbers, as to be a great annoyance to the people. 18, 19. **Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation**—The purport was that, in three days, his execution should be ordered. The language of Joseph describes minutely one form of capital punishment that prevailed in Egypt—*viz.*, that the criminal was decapitated, and then his headless body gibbeted on a tree by the highway, till it was gradually devoured by the ravenous birds. 20-22. **it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday**—This was a holiday season, celebrated at court with great magnificence and honoured by a free pardon to prisoners. Accordingly, the issue happened to the butler and baker, as Joseph had foretold. Doubtless, he felt it painful to communicate such dismal tidings to the baker; but he could not help announcing what God had revealed to him; and it was for the honour of the true God that he should speak plainly. 23. **yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph**—This was human nature. How prone are men to forget and neglect in prosperity, those who have been their companions in adversity (Amos, 6. 6)! But although reflecting no credit on the butler, it was wisely ordered in the providence of God that he should forget him. The Divine purposes required that Joseph should obtain his deliverance in another way, and by other means,

## CHAPTER XLI

**1-24. PHARAOH'S DREAM. 1. at the end of two full years —**

It is not certain whether these years are reckoned from the beginning of Joseph's imprisonment, or from the events described in the preceding chapter — more likely the latter. What a long time for Joseph to experience the sickness of hope deferred! But the time of his enlargement was come when he had sufficiently learned the lessons God designed for him: and the plans of Providence were matured. **Pharaoh dreamed** — Pharaoh, from an Egyptian word Phre, signifying the "sun," was the official title of the kings of that country. The prince, who occupied the throne of Egypt, was Aepohis, one of the Memphite kings, whose capital was On or Heliopolis; and who is universally acknowledged to have been a patriot king. Between the arrival of Abraham and the appearance of Joseph in that country, somewhat more than two centuries had elapsed. Kings sleep and dream, as well as their subjects. And this Pharaoh had two dreams in one night so singular and so similar, so distinct and so apparently significant, so coherent and vividly impressed on his memory, that his spirit was troubled.

**8. he called for all the magicians of Egypt** — It is not possible to define the exact distinction between "magicians" and "wise men:" but they formed different branches of a numerous body, who laid claim to supernatural skill in occult arts and sciences; in revealing mysteries, explaining portents; and, above all, interpreting dreams. Long practice had rendered them expert in devising a plausible way of getting out of every difficulty, and framing an answer suitable to the occasion. But the dreams of Pharaoh baffled their united skill. Unlike their Assyrian brethren (Daniel, 2. 4) they did not pretend to know the meaning of the symbols contained in them, and the providence of God had determined that they should all be non-plused in the exercise of their boasted powers, in order that the inspired wisdom of Joseph might the more remarkably appear. **9-13. then spake the chief butler unto**

**Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults** — This public acknowledgment of the merits of the young Hebrew would, tardy though it was, have reflected credit on the butler — had it not been obviously made to ingratiate himself with his royal master. It is right to confess our faults against God, and against our fellow-men, when that confession is made in the spirit of godly sorrow and penitence. But this man was not much impressed with a sense of the fault he had committed against Joseph; he never thought of God, to whose goodness he was indebted for the prophetic announcement of his release, and in acknowledging his former fault against the king, he was practicing the courtly art of pleasing his master. **14. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph** — Now that God's set time had come (Psalm 105. 19), no human power nor policy could detain Joseph in prison.

During his protracted confinement, he might have often been distressed with perplexing doubts; but the mystery of Providence was about to be cleared up, and all his sorrows forgotten in the course of honour and public usefulness in which his services were

to be employed. **shaved himself**—The Egyptians were the only Oriental nation that liked a smooth chin. All slaves and foreigners who were reduced to that condition, were obliged, on their arrival in that country, to conform to the cleanly habits of the natives, by shaving their beards and heads, the latter of which were covered with a close cap. Thus prepared, Joseph was conducted to the palace, where the king seemed to have been anxiously waiting his arrival. 15, 16. **Pharaoh said . . . I have dreamed a dream**—The king's brief statement of the service required, brought out the genuine piety of Joseph; disclaiming all merit—he ascribed whatever gifts or sagacity he possessed to the Divine source of all wisdom—declared his own inability to penetrate futurity; but, at the same time, his confident persuasion—that God would reveal what was necessary to be known. 17. **Pharaoh said, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river**—The dreams were purely Egyptian—founded on the productions of that country, and the experience of a native. The fertility of Egypt being wholly dependent on the Nile—the scene is laid on the banks of that river; and oxen being in the ancient hieroglyphics symbolical of the earth and of food, animals of that species were introduced in the first dream. 18. **there came up out of the river seven kine**—Cows now, of the buffalo kind, are seen daily plunging into the Nile; when their huge form is gradually emerging, they seem as if rising “out of the river.” **and they fed in a meadow**—Nile grass; the aquatic plants that grow on the marshy banks of that river, particularly the lotus kind, on which cattle were usually fattened. 19. **behold, seven other kine . . . poor and ill-favoured**—The cow being the emblem of fruitfulness—the different years of plenty and of famine were aptly represented by the different condition of those kine—the plenty, by the cattle feeding on the richest fodder; and the dearth, by the lean and famishing kine, which the pangs of hunger drove to act contrary to their nature. 22. **I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears**—that is, of Egyptian wheat, which, when “full and good,” is remarkable in size—a single seed sprouting into seven, ten, or fourteen stalks—and each stalk bearing an ear. 23. **blasted with the east wind**—destructive every where to grain, but particularly so in Egypt; where, sweeping over the sandy deserts of Arabia, it comes in the character of a hot, blighting wind, that quickly withers all vegetation (Cf. Ezekiel, 19. 12; Hosea, 13. 15). 24. **the thin ears devoured the seven good ears**—*devoured* is a different word from that used *v.* 4, and conveys the idea of destroying, by absorbing to themselves all the nutritious virtue of the soil around them.

**25-36. JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS.** 25. **Joseph said . . . The dream . . . is one**—They both pointed to the same event—a remarkable dispensation of seven years of unexampled abundance, to be followed by a similar period of unparalleled dearth. The repetition of the dream in two different forms was designed to show the absolute certainty and speedy arrival of this public crisis; the interpretation was accompanied by several suggestions of practical wisdom for meeting so great an emergency



as was impending. 33. **Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man** — The explanation given, when the key to the dreams was supplied, appears to have been satisfactory to the king and his courtiers; and we may suppose that much and anxious conversation would arise, is the course of which Joseph might have been asked, whether he had any thing further to say. No doubt the providence of God provided the opportunity of his suggesting what was necessary. 34. **and let him appoint officers over the land** — overseers, equivalent to the beys of modern Egypt. **take up the fifth part of the land** — *i. e.*, of the land produce; to be purchased and stored by government, instead of being sold to foreign corn merchants.

**37-57. JOSEPH MADE RULER OF EGYPT.** 38. **Pharaoh said unto his servants** — The kings of ancient Egypt were assisted in the management of state affairs by the advice of the most distinguished members of the priestly order; and, accordingly, before admitting Joseph to the new and extraordinary office that was to be created, those ministers were consulted as to the expediency and propriety of the appointment. **a man in whom the Spirit of God is** — An acknowledgment of the being and power of the true God, though faint and feeble, continued to linger amongst the higher classes long after idolatry had come to prevail. 40. **Thou shalt be over my house** — This sudden change in the condition of a man who had just been taken out of prison could take place nowhere, except in Egypt. In ancient as well as modern times, slaves have often risen to be its rulers. But the special providence of God had determined to make Joseph governor of Egypt; and the way was paved for it by the deep and universal conviction produced in the minds both of the king and his counsellors, that a Divine spirit animated his mind, and had given him such extraordinary knowledge. **according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled** — *lit.*, kiss. This refers to the edict granting official power to Joseph, to be issued in the form of a firman, as in all Oriental countries; and all who should receive that order would kiss it, according to the usual Eastern mode of acknowledging obedience and respect for the sovereign. [WILKINSON.] 41. **Pharaoh said . . . See, I have set thee over all the land** — These words were preliminary to investiture with the insignia of office, which were these — the signet ring, used for signing public documents, and its impression was more valid than the sign-manual of the king; the khelaat or dress of honour, a coat of finely wrought linen, or rather cotton, worn only by the highest personages; the gold necklace, a badge of rank — the plain or ornamental *form* of it indicating the degree of rank and dignity; the privilege of riding in a state carriage, the second chariot; and lastly — 43. **they cried before him, Bow the knee** — *abrech*, an Egyptian term; not referring to prostration, but signifying, according to some, "father" (Cf. ch. 45. 8); according to others, "native prince" — *i. e.*, proclaimed him naturalized, in order to remove all popular dislike to him as a foreigner. 44. These ceremonies of investiture were closed in usual form by the king, in council, solemnly ratifying the appointment. **I am Pharaoh, and without thee, &c.** — a pro-

verbal mode of expression for great power. 45. **Zaphnath-paaneah** — variously interpreted, “revealer of secrets;” “saviour of the land;” and, from the hieroglyphics, “a wise man fleeing from pollution”—*i. e.*, adultery. **gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of**—His naturalization was completed by this alliance with a family of high distinction. On being founded by an Arab colony, Poti-pherah, like Jethro, priest of Midian, might be a worshipper of the true God; and thus Joseph, a pious man, will be freed from the charge of marrying an idolatress for worldly ends. **On**—called Avon (Ezekiel, 30. 17), and also Beth-shemesh (Jeremiah, 43. 13). In looking at this profusion of honours heaped suddenly upon Joseph, it cannot be doubted that he would humbly, yet thankfully, acknowledge the hand of a special Providence in conducting him through all his chequered course to almost royal power; and we, who know more than Joseph did, cannot only see that his advancement was subservient to the most important purposes relative to the Church of God, but learn the great lesson that a Providence directs the minutest events of human life. 46. **Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh**—seventeen when brought into Egypt, probably three in prison, and thirteen in the service of Potiphar. **went out . . . all the land**—made an immediate survey, to determine the site and size of the storehouses required for the different quarters of the country. 47. **the earth brought forth by handfuls**—a singular expression, alluding not only to the luxuriance of the crop, but the practice of the reapers grasping the ears, which alone were cut. 48. **he gathered up all the food of the seven years**—It gives a striking idea of the exuberant fertility of this land, that, from the superabundance of the seven plenteous years, corn enough was laid up for the subsistence, not only of its home population, but of the neighbouring countries, during the seven years of dearth. 50-52. **unto Joseph were born two sons**—These domestic events, which increased his temporal happiness, develop the piety of his character in the names conferred upon his children. 53-56. **The seven years of plenteousness . . . ended**—Over and above the proportion purchased for the government during the years of plenty, the people could still have husbanded much for future use. But improvident as men commonly are in the time of prosperity, they found themselves in want, and must have starved in thousands had not Joseph anticipated and provided for the protracted calamity. 57. **The famine was sore in all lands**—*i. e.*, the lands contiguous to Egypt—Canaan, Syria and Arabia.

## CHAPTER XLII.

1-38. JOURNEY INTO EGYPT. I. **Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt**—learned from common rumour. It is evident, from Jacob's language, that his own and his son's families had suffered greatly from the scarcity; and through the increasing severity of the scourge, those men, who had formerly shown both activity and spirit, were sinking into despondency. God would

not interpose miraculously when natural means of preservation were within reach. 5. **the famine was in the land of Canaan**—The tropical rains, which annually falling swell the Nile, are those of Palestine also; and their failure would produce the same disastrous effects in Canaan as in Egypt. Numerous caravans of its people, therefore, poured over the sandy desert of Suez, with their beasts of burden, for the purchase of corn; and amongst others, “the sons of Israel” were compelled to undertake a journey from which painful associations made them strongly averse. 6. **Joseph was the governor**—in the zenith of his power and influence. **he it was that sold**—*i. e.*, directed the sales; for it is impossible that he could give attendance in every place. It is probable, however, that he may have personally superintended the storehouses near the border of Canaan, both because that was the most exposed part of the country, and because he must have anticipated the arrival of some messengers from his father’s house. **Joseph’s brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him**—His prophetic dreams were in the course of being fulfilled, and the atrocious barbarity of his brethren had been the means of bringing about the very issue they had planned to prevent (Isaiah, 60. 14; Revelation, 3. 9, last clause). 7, 8. **Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them . . . but they knew not him**—this is not wonderful. They were full-grown men—he was but a lad at parting. They were in their usual garb—he was in his official robes. They never dreamt of him as governor of Egypt, while he had been expecting them. They had but one face—he had ten persons to judge by. **made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly**—It would be an injustice to Joseph’s character, to suppose that this stern manner was prompted by any vindictive feelings—he never indulged any resentment against others who had injured him. But he spoke in the authoritative tone of the governor, in order to elicit some much longed for intelligence respecting the state of his father’s family, as well as to bring his brethren, by their own humiliation and distress, to a sense of the evils they had done to him. 9-14. **Ye are spies**—this is a suspicion entertained regarding strangers in all Eastern countries down to the present day. Joseph, however, who was well aware that his brethren were not spies, has been charged with cruel dissimulation, with a deliberate violation of what he knew to be the truth, in imputing to them such a character. But it must be remembered that he was sustaining the part of a ruler; and, in fact, acting on the very principle sanctioned by many of the sacred writers, and our Lord himself, who spoke parables (fictitious stories) to promote a good end. 15. **By the life of Pharaoh**—It is a very common practice in Western Asia to swear by the life of the king. Joseph spoke in the style of an Egyptian, and perhaps did not think there was any evil in it. But we are taught to regard all such expressions in the light of an oath (Matthew, 5. 34; James, 5. 12). 17-24. **put them . . . into ward three days**—Their confinement had been designed to bring them to salutary reflection. And this object was attained, for they looked upon the retributive justice of God as now pursuing them in that foreign land. The drift of their conversation is one

of the most striking instances of the power of conscience on record.

24. **took . . . Simeon, and bound him** — he had probably been the chief instigator — the most violent actor in the outrage upon Joseph ; and if so, his selection to be the imprisoned and fettered hostage for their return would, in the present course of their reflections, have a painful significance.

25-28. **Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money** — This private generosity was not an infringement of his duty — a defrauding of the revenue. He would have a discretionary power — he was daily enriching the king's exchequer — and he might have paid the sum from his own purse.

27. **inn** — a mere station for baiting beasts of burden. **he espied his money** — the discovery threw them into greater perplexity than ever. If they had been congratulating themselves on escaping from the ruthless governor, they perceived that now he would have a handle against them ; and it is observable, that they looked upon this as a judgment of heaven. Thus one leading design of Joseph was gained in their consciences being roused to a sense of guilt.

35. **as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's . . . money was in his sack** — It appears that they had been silent about the money discovery at the resting-place, as their father might have blamed them for not instantly returning. However innocent they knew themselves to be, it was universally felt to be an unhappy circumstance, which might bring them into new and greater perils.

36. **Me have ye bereaved** — this exclamation indicates a painfully excited state of feeling, and it shows how difficult it is for even a good man to yield implicit submission to the course of Providence. The language does not imply that his missing sons had got foul play from the hands of the rest, but he looks upon Simeon as lost, as well as Joseph, and he insinuates it was by some imprudent statements of theirs that he was exposed to the risk of losing Benjamin also.

37. **Reuben spake . . . Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee** — This was a thoughtless and unwarrantable condition — one that he never seriously expected his father would accept. It was designed only to give assurance of the greatest care being taken of Benjamin. But unforeseen circumstances might arise to render it impossible for all of them to preserve that young lad (James, 4. 13), and Jacob was much pained by the prospect. Little did he know that God was dealing with him severely, but in kindness (Hebrews, 12. 7, 8), and that all those things he thought against him were working together for his good.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

1-14. PREPARATIONS FOR A SECOND JOURNEY TO EGYPT. 2. **their father said . . . Go again, buy us a little food** — It was no easy matter to bring Jacob to agree to the only conditions on which his sons could return to Egypt (ch. 42. 15). The necessity of immediately procuring fresh supplies for the maintenance of themselves and their families overcame every other consideration ; and extorted his consent to Benjamin joining in a journey, which his

sons entered on with mingled feelings of hope and anxiety—of hope, because having now complied with the governor's demand to bring down their youngest brother, they flattered themselves that the alleged ground of suspecting them would be removed; and of apprehension, that some ill designs were meditated against them. 11. **take of the best fruits . . . a present**—It is an Oriental practice never to approach a man of power without a present, and Jacob might remember how he pacified his brother (Proverbs, 21. 14)—balm, spices and myrrh (ch. 37. 25), honey, which some think was *dibs*, a syrup made from ripe dates [BOCHART]; but others, the honey of Hebron, which is still valued as far superior to that of Egypt; nuts, pistachio nuts, of which Syria grows the best in the world; almonds, which were more abundant in Palestine. 12. **take double money**—the first sum to be returned, and another sum for a new supply. The restored money in the sack's mouth was a perplexing circumstance. But it might have been done inadvertently by one of the servants—so Jacob persuaded himself—and happy it was for his own peace, and the encouragement of the travellers that he took this view. Besides the duty of restoring it, honesty in their case was clearly the best—the safest policy. 14. **God Almighty give you mercy before the man**—Jacob is here committing them all to the care of God, and resigned to what appears a heavy trial, prays that it may be overruled for good.

15-30. ARRIVAL IN EGYPT. 15. **stood before Joseph**—We may easily imagine the delight with which, amid the crowd of other applicants, the eye of Joseph would fix on his brethren and Benjamin. But occupied with his public duties, he consigned them to the care of a confidential servant till he should have finished the business of the day. 16. **ruler of his house**—In the houses of wealthy Egyptians one upper man-servant was intrusted with the management of the house (Cf. ch. 39. 5). **slay and make ready**—*Hebrew*, “kill a killing”—implying preparations for a grand entertainment (Cf. ch. 31. 54; I Samuel, 25. 11; Proverbs, 9. 2; Matthew, 22. 4). The animals have to be killed as well as prepared at home. The heat of the climate requires that the cook should take the joints directly from the hands of the flesher, and the Oriental taste is from habit, fond of newly killed meat. A great profusion of viands, with an inexhaustible supply of vegetables, was provided for the repasts, to which strangers were invited, the pride of Egyptian people consisting rather in the quantity and variety than in the choice or delicacy of the dishes at their table. **dine . . . at noon**—the hour of dinner was at mid-day. 18. **the men were afraid**—Their feelings of awe on entering the stately mansion, unaccustomed as they were to houses at all—their anxiety at the reasons of their being taken there—their solicitude about the restored money—their honest simplicity in communicating their distress to the steward, and his assurance of having received their money in “full weight”—the offering of their fruit present, which would, as usual, be done with some parade, and the Oriental salutations that passed between their host and them—are all described in a graphic and animated manner.

**31-34. THE DINNER.** 31. **Joseph said, Set on bread**—equivalent to having dinner served, bread being a term inclusive of all victuals. The table was a small stool, most probably the usual round form, “since persons might even then be seated according to their rank or seniority, and the modern Egyptian table is not without its post of honour and a fixed gradation of place.” [WILKINSON.] Two or at most three persons were seated at one table. But the host being the highest in rank of the company, had a table to himself; whilst it was so arranged that an Egyptian was not placed nor obliged to eat from the same dish as an Hebrew. 32. **Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination**—The prejudice probably arose from the detestation in which, from the oppressions of the shepherd-kings, the nation held all of that occupation. 34. **took and sent messes . . . Benjamin’s mess was five times**—In Egypt, as in other Oriental countries, there were, and are, two modes of paying attention to a guest whom the host wishes to honour—either by giving a choice piece from his own hand, or ordering it to be taken to the stranger. The degree of respect shown consists in the quantity, and while the ordinary rule of distinction is a double mess, it must have appeared a very distinguished mark of favour bestowed on Benjamin to have no less than five times any of his brethren. **they drank, and were merry with him**—*Hebrew*, “drank freely,” same as Solomon’s Song, 5. 1; John, 2. 10. In all these cases, the idea of intemperance is excluded. The painful anxieties and cares of Joseph’s brethren were dispelled, and they were at ease.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

**1-34. POLICY TO STAY HIS BRETHREN.** 1. **And Joseph commanded the steward**—The design of putting the cup into the sack of Benjamin was obviously to bring that young man into a situation of difficulty or danger, in order thereby to discover how far the brotherly feelings of the rest would be roused to sympathize with his distress, and stimulate their exertions in procuring his deliverance. But for what purpose was the money restored? It was done, in the first instance, from kindly feelings to his father; but another and further design seems to have been, the prevention of any injurious impressions as to the character of Benjamin. The discovery of the cup in *his* possession, if there had been nothing else to judge by, might have fastened a painful suspicion of guilt on the youngest brother; but the sight of the money in each man’s sack would lead all to the same conclusion, that Benjamin was just as innocent as themselves, although the additional circumstance of the cup being found in his sack would bring him into greater trouble and danger. 2. **put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack’s mouth**—it was a large goblet, as the original denotes, highly valued by its owner, on account of its costly material, or its elegant finish, and which had probably graced his table at the sumptuous entertainment of the previous day. 3. **As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away**—They commenced

their homeward journey at early dawn (see ch. 18. 2); and it may be readily supposed in high spirits, after so happy an issue from all their troubles and anxieties. 4. **when they were gone out of the city . . . Joseph said unto his steward** — They were brought to a sudden halt by the stunning intelligence that an article of rare value was amissing from the governor's house. It was a silver cup: so strong suspicions were entertained against them, that a special messenger was dispatched to search them. 5. **Is not this it in which my lord drinketh** — not only kept for the governor's personal use, but whereby he divineth. Divination by cups, to ascertain the course of futurity, was one of the prevalent superstitions of ancient Egypt, as it is of Eastern countries still. It is not likely that Joseph, a pious believer in the true God, would have addicted himself to this superstitious practice. But he might have availed himself of that popular notion to carry out the successful execution of his stratagem for the last decisive trial of his brethren. 6, 7. **he overtook them, and he spake . . . these words** — The intelligence must have come upon them like a thunderbolt, and one of their most predominant feelings must have been the humiliating and galling sense of being made so often objects of suspicion. Protesting their innocence, they invited a search. The challenge was accepted. Beginning with the eldest, every sack was examined, and the cup being found in Benjamin's, they all returned in an indescribable agony of mind to the house of the governor, throwing themselves at his feet, with the remarkable confession, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." 16-34. **Judah said, What shall we say?** — This address needs no comment — consisting at first of short, broken sentences, as if, under the overwhelming force of the speaker's emotions, his utterance were choked, it becomes more free and copious by the effort of speaking, as he proceeds. Every word finds its way to the heart; and it may well be imagined that Benjamin, who stood there speechless, like a victim about to be laid on the altar, when he heard the magnanimous offer of Judah to submit to slavery for his ransom, would be bound by a lifelong gratitude to his generous brother; a tie that seems to have become hereditary in his tribe. Joseph's behaviour must not be viewed from any single point, or in separate parts, but as a whole — a well-thought, deep-laid, closely-connected plan; and though some features of it do certainly exhibit an appearance of harshness, yet the pervading principle of his conduct was real, genuine brotherly kindness. Read in this light, the narrative of the proceedings describes the continuous, though secret pursuit of one end; and Joseph discovers, in his management of the scheme, a very high order of intellect — a warm and susceptible heart, united to a judgment that exerted a complete control over his feelings — a happy invention in devising means toward the attainment of his ends, and an inflexible adherence to the course, however painful, which prudence required.

## CHAPTER XLV.

**1-28. JOSEPH MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN. 1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself**—The severity of the inflexible magistrate here gives way to the natural feelings of the man and the brother. However well he had disciplined his mind, he felt it impossible to resist the artless eloquence of Judah. He saw a satisfactory proof, in the return of *all* his brethren on such an occasion, that they were affectionately united to one another; he had heard enough to convince him that time, reflection or grace, had made a happy improvement on their character; and he would, probably, have proceeded in a calm and leisurely manner to reveal himself, as prudence might have dictated. But when he heard the heroic self-sacrifice of Judah, and realized all the affection of that proposal—a proposal for which he was totally unprepared—he was completely unmanned; he felt himself forced to bring this painful trial to an end. **he cried, Cause every man to go out from me**—In ordering the departure of witnesses, of this last scene, he acted as a warm-hearted and real friend to his brothers—his conduct was dictated by motives of the highest prudence—that of preventing their early iniquities from becoming known, either to the members of his household, or amongst the people of Egypt. **2. he wept aloud**—No doubt, from the fullness of highly excited feelings; but to indulge in vehement and long-continued transports of sobbing, is the usual way in which the Orientals express their grief. **3. I am Joseph**—The emotions that now rose in the breast of himself, as well as his brethren—and chased each other in rapid succession—were many and violent. He was agitated by sympathy and joy; they were astonished, confounded, terrified; and betrayed their terror by shrinking, as far as they could, from his presence. So “troubled” were they, that he had to repeat his announcement of himself; and what kind, affectionate terms did he use. He spoke of their having sold him—not to wound their feelings, but to convince them of his identity; and then, to re-assure their minds, he traced the agency of an overruling Providence in his exile and present honour. Not that he wished them to roll the responsibility of their crime on God; no, his only object was to encourage their confidence, and induce them to trust in the plans he had formed for the future comfort of their father and themselves. **6. and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest**—Ear is an *old* English word, meaning to plow (Cf. 1 Samuel, 8. 12; Isaiah, 30. 24). This seems to confirm the view given (ch. 41. 57), that the famine was caused by an extraordinary drought, which prevented the annual overflowing of the Nile; and, of course, made the land unfit to receive the seed of Egypt. **14, 15. and he fell upon . . . Benjamin’s neck**—The sudden transition from a condemned criminal to a fondled brother, might have occasioned fainting or even death, had not his tumultuous feelings been relieved by a torrent of tears. But Joseph’s attentions were not confined to Benjamin. He affectionately embraced every one of his brothers in succession; and, by those actions,



his forgiveness was demonstrated more fully than it could be by words. 17-20. **Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren** — As Joseph might have been prevented by delicacy — the king himself invited the patriarch and all his family to migrate into Egypt and made most liberal arrangements for their removal and their subsequent settlement. It displays the character of this Pharaoh to advantage, that he was so kind to the relatives of Joseph, but indeed the greatest liberality he could show, could never recompense the services of so great a benefactor of his kingdom. 21. **Joseph gave them wagons** — which must have been novelties in Palestine; for wheeled carriages were and are almost unknown there. 22. **changes of raiment** — It was and is customary with great men, to bestow on their friends dresses of distinction, and in places where they are of the same description and quality, the value of these presents consists in their number. The great number given to Benjamin bespoke the warmth of his brother's attachment to him; and Joseph felt, from the amiable temper they now all displayed — he might, with perfect safety, indulge this fond partiality for a mother's son. 23. **to his father he sent** — a supply of every thing that could contribute to his support and comfort — the large and liberal scale on which that supply was given being intended — like the five messes of Benjamin — as a token of his filial love. 24. **so he sent his brethren away** — In dismissing them on their homeward journey, he gave them this parting admonition: "See that ye fall not out by the way" — a caution that would be greatly needed; for not only during the journey would they be occupied in recalling the parts they had respectively acted in the events that led to Joseph's being sold into Egypt, but their wickedness would soon have to come to the knowledge of their venerable father.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

**1-4. SACRIFICE AT BEER-SHEBA.** 1. **Israel took his journey with all that he had** — that is, his household; for in compliance with Pharaoh's recommendation, he left his heavy furniture behind. In contemplating a step so important as that of leaving Canaan, which at his time of life he might never revisit, so pious a patriarch would ask the guidance and counsel of God. With all his anxiety to see Joseph, he would rather have died in Canaan without that highest of earthly gratifications, than leave it without the consciousness of carrying the Divine blessing along with him. **came to Beer-sheba** — That place, which was in his direct route to Egypt, had been a favourite encampment of Abraham (ch. 21. 33) and Isaac (ch. 26. 25), and was memorable for their experience of the Divine goodness; and Jacob seems to have deferred his public devotions till he had reached a spot so consecrated by covenant to his own God and the God of his fathers. 2. **God spake unto Israel** — Here is a virtual renewal of the covenant and an assurance of its blessings. Moreover, here is an answer on the chief subject of Jacob's prayer, and a removal of any doubt as to

the course he was meditating. \* At first the prospect of paying a personal visit to Joseph had been viewed with unmingled joy. But, on calmer consideration, many difficulties appeared to lie in the way. He might remember the prophecy to Abraham that his posterity was to be afflicted in Egypt, and also that his father had been expressly told *not* to go; he might fear the contamination of idolatry to his family and their forgetfulness of the land of promise. These doubts were removed by the answer of the oracle, and an assurance given him of great and increasing prosperity. 3. **I will there make of thee a great nation**—How truly this promise was fulfilled, appears in the fact, that the seventy souls who went down into Egypt increased, in the space of 215 years, to 180,000. 4. **I will also surely bring thee up again**—As Jacob could not expect to live till the former promise was realized, he must have seen that the latter was to be accomplished only to his posterity. To himself it was literally verified in the removal of his remains to Canaan; but, in the large and liberal sense of the words, it was made good only on the establishment of Israel in the land of promise. **Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes**—shall perform the last office of filial piety; and this implied that he should henceforth enjoy, without interruption, the society of that favourite son.

5-27. IMMIGRATION TO EGYPT. 5. **Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba**—to cross the border and settle in Egypt. However refreshed and invigorated in spirit by the religious services at Beer-sheba, he was now borne down by the infirmities of advanced age; and, therefore, his sons undertook all the trouble and toil of the arrangements, while the enfeebled old patriarch, with the wives and children, was conveyed, by slow and leisurely stages, in the Egyptian vehicles sent for their accommodation. 6. **goods, which they had gotten in the land**—not furniture, but substance—precious things. 7. **daughters**—As Dinah was his only daughter, this must mean daughters-in-law. **all his seed, brought he with him**—Though disabled by age from active superintendence, yet, as the venerable sheik of the tribe, he was looked upon as their common head, and consulted in every step. 8-27. **all the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten**—Strictly speaking, there were only sixty-six went to Egypt; but to these add Joseph and his two sons, and Jacob the head of the clan, and the whole number amounts to seventy. In the speech of Stephen (Acts, 7. 14) the number is stated to be seventy-five; but as that estimate includes five sons of Ephraim and Manasseh (1 Chronicles, 7. 14-20), born in Egypt, the two accounts coincide.

28-34. ARRIVAL IN EGYPT. 28. **he sent Judah before him unto Joseph**—This precautionary measure was obviously proper for apprizing the king of the entrance of so large a company within his territories, moreover, it was necessary in order to receive instruction from Joseph as to the *locale* of their future settlement. 29 30 **Joseph made ready his chariot**—The difference between chariot and wagon was not only in the lighter and more elegant construction of the former, but in the one being drawn by horses and the other by oxen. Being a public man in Egypt, Joseph was

required to appear every where in an equipage suitable to his dignity; and, therefore, it was not owing either to pride or ostentatious parade that he drove his carriage, while his father's family were accommodated only in rude and humble wagons. **presented himself unto him** — in an attitude of filial reverence (Cf. Exodus, 22. 17). The interview was a most affecting one — the happiness of the delighted father was now at its height; and life having no higher charms, he could, in the very spirit of the aged Simeon, have departed in peace. 31-34. **Joseph said . . . I will go up, and show Pharaoh** — It was a tribute of respect due to the king to apprise him of their arrival. And the instructions which he gave them were worthy of his character alike as an affectionate brother and a religious man.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

**1-31. PRESENTATION AT COURT. 1. Joseph . . . told Pharaoh, My father, and my brethren** — Joseph furnishes a beautiful example of a man who could bear equally well the extremes of prosperity and adversity. High as he was, he did not forget that he had a superior. Dearly as he loved his father, and anxiously as he desired to provide for the whole family, he would not go into the arrangements he had planned for their stay in Goshen, until he had obtained the sanction of his royal master. **2. he took some of his brethren** — probably the five eldest brothers: seniority being the least invidious principle of selection. **4. For to sojourn . . . are we come** — The royal conversation took the course which Joseph had anticipated (ch. 46. 33), and they answered according to previous instructions — manifesting, however, in their determination to return to Canaan, a faith and piety which affords a hopeful symptom of their having become all, or most of them, religious men. **7. Joseph brought in Jacob his father** — There is a pathetic and most affecting interest attending this interview with royalty; and when, with all the simplicity and dignified solemnity of a man of God, Jacob signalized his entrance by imploring the Divine blessing on the royal head, it may easily be imagined what a striking impression the scene would produce (Cf. Hebrews, 7. 7). **8. Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?** — The question was put from the deep and impressive interest which the appearance of the old patriarch had created in the minds of Pharaoh and his court. In the low-lying land of Egypt, and from the artificial habits of its society, the age of man was far shorter amongst the inhabitants of that country, than it had yet become in the pure bracing climate and among the simple mountaineers of Canaan. The Hebrews, at least, still attained a protracted longevity. **9. The days of the years of my pilgrimage, &c.** — Though 130 years, he reckons by days (Cf. Psalm 90. 12), which he calls *few*, as they appeared in the retrospect, and *evii*, because his life had been one almost unbroken series of trouble. The answer is remarkable, considering the comparative darkness of the patriarchal age (Cf. 2 Timothy, 1. 10). **11. Joseph placed his father and his brethren . . . in the best of the land** — best *pasture* land in lower Egypt.

Goshen, "the land of verdure," lay along the Pelusaic or eastern branch of the Nile. It included a part of the district of Heliopolis, or "On," the capital, and on the east stretched out a considerable length into the desert. The ground included within these boundaries was a rich and fertile extent of natural meadow, and admirably adapted for the purposes of the Hebrew shepherds (Cf. ch. 49. 24; Psalm 34. 10; 78. 72). 13-15. **there was no bread in all the land**—This probably refers to the second year of the famine (ch. 45. 6), when any little stores of individuals or families were exhausted, and when the people had become universally dependent on the government. At first they obtained supplies for payment. Ere long, money failed. 16. **And Joseph said, Give your cattle**—“This was the wisest course that could be adopted for the preservation of both the people and the cattle, which, being bought by Joseph, was supported at the royal expense, and very likely returned to the people at the end of the famine, to enable them to resume their agricultural labours.” 21. **as for the people, he removed them to cities**—obviously for the convenience of the country people, who were doing nothing, to the cities where the corn stores were situated. 22. **Only the land of the priests, bought he not**—These lands were inalienable, being endowments by which the temples were supported. The priests for themselves received an annual allowance of provision from the state, and it would evidently have been the height of cruelty to withhold that allowance when their lands were incapable of being tilled. 23-28. **Joseph said, Behold, &c.**—The land being sold to the government (*v.* 19. 20), seed would be distributed for the first crop after the famine; and the people occupy them as tenants-at-will on the payment of a produce rent, almost the same rule as obtains in Egypt in the present day. 29-31. **the time drew nigh that Israel must die**—One only of his dying arrangements is recorded; but that one reveals his whole character. It was the disposal of his remains, which were to be carried to Canaan, not from a mere romantic attachment to his native soil, nor, like his modern descendants, from a superstitious feeling for the soil of the Holy Land, but from faith in the promises. His address to Joseph—“if I have found grace in thy sight,” *i. e.*, as the vizier of Egypt—his exacting a solemn oath that his wishes would be fulfilled, and the peculiar form of that oath, all pointed significantly to the promise, and showed the intensity of his desire to enjoy its blessings (Cf. Numbers, 10. 29). **Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head**—Oriental beds are mere mats, having no head, and the translation should be “the top of his staff,” as the apostle renders it (Hebrews, 11, 21).

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

1-32. JOSEPH'S VISIT TO HIS SICK FATHER. 1. **one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick**—Joseph was hastily sent for, and on this occasion he took with him his two sons. 2. **Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed**—In the chamber where a good man lies, edifying and spiritual discourse may be expected.

3, 4. **God almighty appeared unto me at Luz**—The object of Jacob, in thus reverting to the memorable vision at Bethel—one of the great landmarks in his history—was to point out the splendid promises in reserve for his posterity—to engage Joseph's interest and preserve his continued connection with the people of God, rather than with the Egyptians. **Behold, I will make thee fruitful**—This is a repetition of the covenant (ch. 28. 13-15; 35. 12). Whether these words are to be viewed in a limited sense, as pointing to the many centuries during which the Jews were occupiers of the Holy Land, or whether the words bear a wider meaning, and intimate that the scattered tribes of Israel are to be re-instated in the land of promise as their "everlasting possession," are points that have not yet been satisfactorily determined. 5. **thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh**—It was the intention of the aged patriarch to adopt Joseph's sons as his own, thus giving him a double portion. The reasons of this procedure are stated (1 Chronicles, 5. 1, 2). **are mine**—though their connections might have attached them to Egypt, and opened to them brilliant prospects in the land of their nativity, they willingly accepted the adoption (Hebrews, 11. 25). 9. **Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them**—The apostle (Hebrews, 11. 21) selected the blessing of Joseph's sons as the chief, because the most comprehensive instance of the patriarch's faith which his whole history furnishes. 13. **Joseph took them both**—The very act of pronouncing the blessing was remarkable, showing that Jacob's bosom was animated by the spirit of prophecy. 21. **Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die**—The patriarch could speak of death with composure, but he wished to prepare Joseph and the rest of the family for the shock. **but God shall be with you**—Jacob, in all probability, was not authorized to speak of their bondage—he dwelt only on the certainty of their restoration to Canaan. 22. **moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren**—This was near Shechem (ch. 33. 18; John, 4. 5; also Joshua, 16. 1; 20. 7). And it is probable that the Amorites, having seized upon it during one of his frequent absences, the patriarch, with the united forces of his tribe, recovered it from them by his sword and his bow.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

**1-33. PATRIARCHAL BLESSING.** 1. **Jacob called unto his sons**—It is not to the sayings of the dying saint, so much as of the inspired prophet, that attention is called in this chapter. Under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit he pronounced his prophetic benediction, and described the condition of their respective descendants in the last days or future times.

**3, 4. REUBEN** fortified by his crime the rights and honours of primogeniture. His posterity never made any figure—no judge, prophet, nor ruler, sprang from this tribe.

**5-7. SIMEON AND LEVI** were associates in wickedness, and the same prediction would be equally applicable to both their tribes. Levi had cities allotted to them (Joshua, 21) in every tribe. On

account of their zeal against idolatry, they were honourably "divided in Jacob;" whereas the tribe of Simeon, which was guilty of the grossest idolatry, and the vices inseparable from it, were ignominiously "scattered."

**8-12. JUDAH.**—A high pre-eminence is destined to this tribe (Numbers, 10. 14; Judges, 1. 2). Besides the honour of giving name to the Promised Land—David, and a greater than David—the Messiah sprang from it. Chief amongst the tribes, "it grew up from a lion's whelp," *i. e.*, a little power, till it became 'an old lion'—*i. e.*, calm and quiet, yet still formidable. **until Shiloh come**—Shiloh—this obscure word is variously interpreted to mean "the sent" (John, 17. 3), "the seed" (Isaiah, 11. 1), the "peaceable or prosperous one" (Ephesians, 2. 14) *i. e.*, the Messiah (Isaiah, 11. 10; Romans, 15. 12); and when He should come, "the tribe of Judah should no longer boast either an independent king or a judge of their own." [CALVIN.] The Jews have been for eighteen centuries without a ruler and without a judge since Shiloh came, and "to Him the gathering of the people has been."

**13. ZEBULUN** was to have its lot on the sea coast, close to Zidon, and to engage, like that state, in maritime pursuits and commerce.

**14, 15. ISSACHAR.**—A strong ass couching down between two burdens—*i. e.*, it was to be active, patient, given to agricultural labours. It was established in lower Galilee—a "good land," settling down in the midst of the Canaanites, where, for the sake of quiet, they "bowed their shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute."

**16-18. DAN**—though the son of a secondary wife, was to be "as one of the tribes of Israel." Dan—"a judge." **a serpent . . . an adder**—A serpent, an adder, implies subtlety and stratagem; such was pre-eminently the character of Samson the most illustrious of its judges.

**19. Gad**—This tribe should be often attacked and wasted by hostile powers on their borders (Judges, 10. 8; Jeremiah, 49. 1). But they were generally victorious in the close of their wars.

**20. ASHER.**—"Blessed."—Its allotment was the sea coast between Tyre and Carmel, a district fertile in the production of the finest corn and oil in all Palestine.

**21. NAPHTALI.**—The best rendering we know is this, "Naph-tali is a deer roaming at liberty; he shooteth forth goodly branches," or majestic antlers [TAYLOR'S *Scripture Illustrations*], and the meaning of the prophecy seems to be that the tribe of Naph-tali would be located in a territory so fertile and peaceable, that feeding on the richest pasture, he would spread out, like a deer, its branching antlers.

**22-26. JOSEPH**—**A fruitful bough, &c.**—denotes the extraordinary increase of that tribe (Cf. Numbers, 1. 33-35; Joshua, 17. 17; Deuteronomy, 33. 17). The patriarch describes him as attacked by envy, revenge, temptation, ingratitude, yet still, by the grace of God, he triumphed over all opposition, so that he became the *sustainer* of Israel; and then he proceeds to shower blessings of every kind upon the head of this favourite son. The history of the tribes

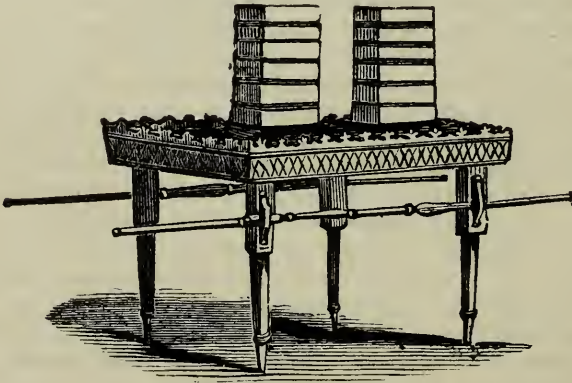
of Ephraim and Manasseh, shows how fully these blessings were realized.

**27-33. BENJAMIN** shall ravin like a wolf. — This tribe in its early history spent its energies in petty or inglorious warfare, and especially in the violent and unjust contest (Judges, 19 20), in which it engaged with the other tribes, when, notwithstanding two victories, it was almost exterminated. **28. all these are the twelve tribes of Israel** — or ancestors. Jacob's prophetic words obviously refer not so much to the sons as to the tribes of Israel. **29. he charged them** — The charge had already been given, and solemnly undertaken (ch. 47. 31). But in mentioning his wishes now, and rehearsing all the circumstances connected with the purchase of Machpelah, he wished to declare, with his latest breath, before all his family, that he died in the same faith as Abraham. **33. when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons** — It is probable that he was supernaturally strengthened for this last momentous office of the patriarch, and that when the Divine afflatus ceased, his exhausted powers giving way, he yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

## CHAPTER L.

**1-26. MOURNING FOR JACOB. 1. Joseph fell upon his father's face, &c.** — On him, as the principal member of the family, devolved the duty of closing the eyes of his venerable parent (Cf. ch. 46. 4), and imprinting the farewell kiss. **2. Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father, &c.** — In ancient Egypt the embalmers were a class by themselves. The process of embalment consisted in infusing a great quantity of resinous substances into the cavities of the body, after the intestines had been removed, and then a regulated degree of heat was applied to dry up the humours, as well as decompose the tarry materials which had been previously introduced. Thirty days were allotted for the completion of this process; forty more were spent in anointing it with spices; the body, tanned from this operation, being then washed, was wrapped in numerous folds of linen cloth — the joinings of which were fastened with gum, and then deposited in a wooden chest, made in the form of a human figure. **3. the Egyptians mourned, &c.** — It was made a period of public mourning, as on the death of a royal personage. **4. Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, &c.** — Care was taken to let it be known that the family sepulchre was provided before leaving Canaan, and that an oath bound his family to convey the remains thither. Besides, Joseph deemed it right to apply for a special leave of absence; and being unfit as a mourner, to appear in the royal presence, he made the request through the medium of others. **7-9. Joseph went up to bury his father** — a journey of 300 miles. The funeral cavalcade, composed of the nobility and military, with their equipages, would exhibit an imposing appearance. **10. they came to the threshing floor of Atad, &c.** — "Atad" may be taken as a common noun, signifying "the plain of the thorn bushes." It was

on the border between Egypt and Canaan ; and as the last opportunity of indulging grief was always the most violent, the Egyptians made a prolonged halt at this spot, while the family of Jacob probably proceeded by themselves to the place of sepulture. 15-21. **When Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, &c.**—Joseph was deeply affected by this communication. He gave them the strongest assurances of his forgiveness, and thereby gave both a beautiful trait of his own pious character, as well as appeared an eminent type of the Saviour. 22, 23. **Joseph dwelt in Egypt**—He lived eighty years after his elevation to the chief power, witnessing a great increase in the prosperity of the kingdom, and also of his own family and kindred—the infant church of God. 24. **Joseph said unto his brethren, I die**—The national feelings of the Egyptians would have been opposed to his burial in Canaan ; but he gave the strongest proof of the strength of his faith and full assurance of the promises, by “the commandment concerning his bones.” 26. **they embalmed him**—His funeral would be conducted in the highest style of Egyptian magnificence, and his mummied corpse carefully preserved till the Exodus.



**TABLE OF SHEW BREAD.**



# EXODUS.

## CHAPTER I.

**1-22. INCREASE OF THE ISRAELITES. I. Now these are the names**—(See ch. 46. 8-26). **7. children of Israel were fruitful**—They were living in a land where, according to the testimony of an ancient author, mothers produced three and four sometimes at a birth; and a modern writer declares that “the females in Egypt, as well among the human race as among animals, surpass all others in fruitfulness.” To this natural circumstance must be added the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. **8. Now there arose up a new king**—About sixty years after the death of Joseph a revolution took place—by which the old dynasty was overthrown, and upper and lower Egypt were united into one kingdom. Assuming that the king formerly reigned in Thebes, it is probable that he would know nothing about the Hebrews; and that, as foreigners and shepherds, the new government would, from the first, regard them with dislike and scorn. **9. he said, . . . Behold, the . . . children of Israel are more and mightier than we**—They had risen to great prosperity—as during the life-time of Joseph and his royal patron, they had, probably, enjoyed a free grant of the land. Their increase and prosperity were viewed with jealousy by the new government; and as Goshen lay between Egypt and Canaan, on the border of which latter country were a number of warlike tribes, it was perfectly conformable to the suggestions of worldly policy that they should enslave and maltreat them, through apprehension of their joining in any invasion by those foreign rovers. The new king, who neither knew the name nor cared for the services of Joseph, was either *Amosis*, or one of his immediate successors. [OSBURN.] **11. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters**—Having first obliged them, it is thought, to pay a ruinous rent, and involved them in difficulties—that new government, in pursuance of its oppressive policy, degraded them to the condition of serfs—employing them exactly as the labouring people are in the present day (driven in companies or bands), in rearing the public works, with taskmasters, who anciently had sticks—now whips—to punish the indolent, or spur on the too languid. All public or royal buildings, in ancient Egypt, were built by captives; and on some of them was placed an inscription—that no free citizen had been engaged in this servile employment. **they built for Pharaoh treasure cities**—These two store places were in the land of Goshen; and being situated near a border liable to invasion, they were fortified cities (Cf. 2 Chronicles, 11. 12). Pithon (*Greek*), Patumos lay on the eastern Pelusiac branch of the Nile, about twelve Roman miles from Heliopolis; and Raamses, called by the LXX. Heroopolis, lay between the same branch of the Nile and the Bitter Lakes. These two fortified cities were situated, therefore, in the same valley; and the fortifi-

cations, which Pharaoh commanded to be built around both, had probably the same common object, of obstructing the entrance into Egypt, which this valley furnished the enemy from Asia. [HENGSTENBERG.] 13, 14. **The Egyptians . . . made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick** — Ruins of great brick buildings are found in all parts of Egypt. The use of crude brick, baked in the sun, was universal in upper and lower Egypt, both for public and private buildings; *all* but the temples themselves were of crude brick. It is worthy of remark, that more bricks bearing the name of Thothmes III, who is supposed to have been the king of Egypt, at the time of the Exodus, have been discovered than of any other period. [WILKINSON.] Parties of these brickmakers are seen depicted on the ancient monuments with "taskmasters"—some standing, others in a sitting posture beside the labourers, with their uplifted sticks in their hands. 15. **the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives** — Two only were spoken to—either they were the heads of a large corporation [LABORDE], or, by tampering with these two, the king designed to terrify the rest into secret compliance with his wishes. [CALVIN.] 16. **If it be a son, then ye shall kill him** — Opinions are divided, however, what was the method of destruction which the king did recommend. Some think that the "stools" were low seats on which these obstetric practitioners sat by the bedside of the Hebrew women; and that, as they might easily discover the sex, so, whenever a boy appeared, they were to strangle it, unknown to its parents; while others are of opinion that the "stools" were stone troughs, by the river side—into which, when the infants were washed—they were to be, as it were, accidentally dropped. 17. **But the midwives feared God** — Their faith inspired them with such courage as to risk their lives, by disobeying the mandate of a cruel tyrant; but it was blended with weakness, which made them shrink from speaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. 20. **God dealt well with the midwives** — This represents God as rewarding them for telling a lie. This difficulty is wholly removed by a more correct translation. To make or build up a house in *Hebrew* idiom, means to have a numerous progeny. The passage then should be rendered thus: God protected the midwives, and the people waxed very mighty; and because the midwives feared, the Hebrews grew and prospered.

## CHAPTER II.

**I-10. BIRTH AND PRESERVATION OF MOSES.** 1. **there went a man of the house of Levi, &c.** — Amram was the husband and Jochebed the wife (Cf. ch. 6. 2; Numbers, 26. 59). The marriage took place and two children, Miriam and Aaron, were born some years before the infanticidal edict. 2. **the woman . . . bare a son, &c.** — Some extraordinary appearance or remarkable comeliness led his parents to augur his future greatness. Beauty was regarded by the ancients as a mark of the Divine favour. **hid him three months** — The parents were a pious couple, and the measures

they took were prompted not only by parental attachment, but by a strong faith in the blessing of God prospering their endeavours to save the infant. 3. **she took for him an ark of bulrushes** — papyrus, a thick, strong and tough, reed. **slime** — the mud of the Nile, which, when hardened, is very tenacious. **pitch** — mineral tar. Boats of this description are seen daily floating on the surface of the river, with no other caulking than Nile mud (Cf. Isaiah, 18. 2), and they are perfectly water-tight unless the coating is forced off by stormy weather. **flags** — a general term for sea or river-weed. The chest was not, as is often represented, committed to the bosom of the water, but laid on the bank where it would naturally appear to have been drifted by the current and arrested by the reedy thicket. The spot is traditionally said to be the Isle of Rhoda, near Old Cairo. 4. **his sister** — Miriam would, probably, be a girl of ten or twelve years of age at the time. 5. **the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river** — The occasion is thought to have been a religious solemnity which the royal family opened by bathing in the sacred stream. Peculiar sacredness was attached to those portions of the Nile which flowed near the temples. The water was there fenced off as a protection from the crocodiles; and, doubtless, the princess had an enclosure reserved for her own use, the road to which seems to have been well known to Jochebed. **walked along** — in procession or in file. **she sent her maid** — her immediate attendant. The term is different from that rendered “maidens.” 6-9. **when she had opened it she saw the child** — The narrative is picturesque. No tale of romance ever described a plot more skillfully laid or more full of interest in the development. The expedient of the ark, the slime and pitch, the choice of the time and place, the appeal to the sensibilities of the female breast, the stationing of the sister as a watch of the proceedings, her timely suggestion of a nurse, and the engagement of the mother herself, all bespeak a more than ordinary measure of ingenuity as well as intense solicitude on the part of the parents. But the origin of the scheme was most probably owing to a Divine suggestion, as its success was due to an overruling Providence, who not only preserved the child's life but provided for his being trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Hence it is said to have been done by faith (Hebrews, 11. 23), either in the general promise of deliverance or some special revelation made to Amram and Jochebed, and in this view, the pious couple gave a beautiful example of a firm reliance on the word of God, united with an active use of the most suitable means. 10. **She brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter** — Though it must have been nearly as severe a trial for Jochebed to part with him the second time as the first, she was, doubtless, reconciled to it by her belief in his high destination as the future deliverer of Israel. His age, when removed to the palace, is not stated; but he was old enough to be well instructed in the principles of the true religion; and those early impressions, deepened by the power of Divine grace, were never forgotten or effaced. **he became her son** — by adoption, and his high rank afforded him advantages in education which, in the providence of God, were

made subservient to far different purposes from what his royal patroness intended. **she called his name Moses**—His parents might, as usual, at the time of his circumcision, have given him a name which is traditionally said to have been Joachim. But the name chosen by the princess, whether of Egyptian or Hebrew origin, is the only one by which he has ever been known to the church; and it is a permanent memorial of the painful incidents of his birth and infancy.

**II-25. HIS SYMPATHY WITH THE HEBREWS. II. in those days when Moses was grown**—not in age and stature only, but in power as well as in renown for accomplishments and military prowess (Acts, 7. 23). There is a gap here in the sacred history which, however, is supplied by the inspired commentary of Paul, who has fully detailed the reasons as well as extent of the change that took place in his worldly condition; and whether, as some say, his royal mother had proposed to make him co-regent and successor to the crown or some other circumstances, led to a declaration of his mind, he determined to renounce the palace and identify himself with the suffering people of God (Hebrews, II. 24-26). The descent of some great sovereigns, like Diocletian and Charles V, from a throne into private life, is nothing to the sacrifice which Moses made through the power of faith. **he went out unto his brethren**—to make a full and systematic inspection of their condition in the various parts of the country where they were dispersed (Acts, 7. 23), and he adopted this proceeding in pursuance of the patriotic purpose that the faith, which is of the operation of God, was even then forming in his heart. **he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew**—one of the taskmasters scourging a Hebrew slave without any just cause (Acts, 7. 24), and in so cruel a manner that he seems to have died under the barbarous treatment; for the conditions of the sacred story imply such a fatal issue. The sight was new and strange to him, and, though pre-eminent for meekness (Numbers, 12. 3), he was fired with indignation. **12. he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand**—This act of Moses may seem, and indeed by some has been condemned as rash and unjustifiable, in plain terms as a deed of assassination. But we must not judge of his action in such a country and age by the standard of law and the notions of right which prevail in our Christian land; and, besides, not only is it not spoken of as a crime in Scripture or as distressing the perpetrator with remorse, but according to existing customs among nomadic tribes, he was bound to avenge the blood of a brother. The person he slew, however, being a government officer, he had rendered himself amenable to the laws of Egypt, and, therefore, he endeavoured to screen himself from the consequences by concealment of the corpse. **13, 14. two men of the Hebrews strove together**—His benevolent mediation in this strife, though made in the kindest and mildest manner, was resented, and the taunt of the aggressor showing that Moses' conduct on the preceding day had become generally known, he determined to consult his safety by immediate flight (Hebrews, II. 27). These two incidents prove that neither were the Israelities yet ready to go out of

Egypt nor Moses prepared to be their leader (James, 1. 20). It was by the staff and not the sword, by the meekness and not the wrath of Moses that God was to accomplish that great work of deliverance. Both he and the people of Israel were for forty years longer cast into the furnace of affliction, yet it was therein that He had chosen them (Isaiah, 48. 10). 15. **Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh**—his flight took place in the second year of Thothmes. 1. **dwelt in the land of Midian**—situated on the shore of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, and occupied by the posterity of Midian, the son of Cush. The territory extended northward to the top of the gulf, and westward far across the desert of Sinai. And from their position near the sea they early combined trading with pastoral pursuits (Genesis, 37. 28). The head-quarters of Jethro are supposed to have been where Dahab-Madian now stands; and from Moses coming direct to that place, he may have traveled with a caravan of merchants. But another place is fixed by tradition in Wady Shuweib or Jethro's valley, on the east of the mountain of Moses. **sat down by a well**—See Genesis, 29. 3. 16-22. **the priest of Midian**—As the officers were usually conjoined, he was the ruler also of the people called Cushites or Ethiopians, and like many other chiefs of pastoral people in that early age, he still retained the faith and worship of the true God. **seven daughters**—were shepherdesses to whom Moses was favourably introduced by an act of courtesy and courage in protecting them from the rude shepherds of some neighbouring tribe at a well. He afterward formed a close and permanent alliance with this family by marrying one of the daughters, Zipporah (a little bird), called a Cushite or Ethiopian (Numbers, 12. 1), and whom he, doubtless, obtained in the manner of Jacob by service. He had by her two sons, whose names were, according to common practice, commemorative of incidents in the family history. 23. **the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage**—The language seems to imply that the Israelites had experienced a partial relaxation, probably through the influence of Moses' royal patroness; but in the reign of her father's successor the persecution was renewed with increased severity.

### CHAPTER III.

1-22. DIVINE APPEARANCE AND COMMISSION TO MOSES. 1. **Now Moses kept the flock**—This employment he had entered on in furtherance of his matrimonial views (see ch. 2. 21), but it is probable he was continuing his services now on other terms like Jacob during the latter years of his stay with Laban (Genesis, 30. 28). **he led the flock to the back side of the desert**—*i. e.*, on the west of the desert [GESENIUS], and assuming Jethro's head-quarters to have been at Dahab, the route by which Moses led his flock must have been west through the wide valley called by the Arabs, Wady-es-Zugherah [ROBINSON], which conducted into the interior of the wilderness. **Mountain of God**—so named either according to Hebrew idiom from its great height as "great mountains,"

*Hebrew*, "mountains of God" (Psalm 36. 6); "goodly cedars," *Hebrew*, "cedars of God" (Psalm 80. 10), or as some think from its being the old abode of "the glory;" or finally from its being the theater of transactions most memorable in the history of the true religion. **to Horeb**—rather, Horeb-ward. Horeb, *i. e.*, dry, desert, was the general name for the mountainous district in which Sinai is situated and of which it is a part. (See ch. 19.) It was used to designate the region comprehending that immense range of lofty, desolate and barren hills, at the base of which, however, there are not only many patches of verdure to be seen but almost all the valleys or *wadys*, as they are called, show a thin coating of vegetation, which, toward the south, becomes more luxuriant. The Arab shepherds seldom take their flocks to a greater distance than one day's journey from their camp. Moses must have gone at least two days' journey, and although he seems to have been only following his pastoral course, that region, from its numerous springs in the clefts of the rocks, being the chief resort of the tribes during the summer heats, the Providence of God led him thither for an important purpose. 2, 3. **the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire**—It is common in Scriptures to represent the elements and operations of nature, as winds, fires, earthquakes, pestilence, every thing enlisted in executing the Divine will, as the "angels" or messengers of God. But, in such cases, God himself is considered as really, though invisibly, present. Here the preternatural fire may be primarily meant by the expression "Angel of the Lord;" but it is clear that under this symbol the Divine Being was present whose name is given (*v.* 4, 6), and, elsewhere, called the angel of the covenant, Jehovah-Jesus. **out of the midst of a bush**—The wild acacia or thorn, with which that desert abounds, and which is generally dry and brittle, so much so, that at certain seasons a spark might kindle a district far and wide into a blaze. A fire, therefore, being in the midst of such a desert bush was "a great sight." It is generally supposed to have been emblematic of the Israelites' condition in Egypt, oppressed by a grinding servitude and a bloody persecution, and yet, in spite of the cruel policy that was bent on annihilating them, they continued as numerous and thriving as ever. The reason was "God was in the midst of them." The symbol may also represent the present state of the Jews as well as of the Church generally in the world. 4. **when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see**—The manifestations which God anciently made of Himself were always accompanied by clear, unmistakable signs that the communications were really from heaven. This certain evidence was given to Moses. He saw a fire, but no human agent to kindle it; he heard a voice, but no human lips from which it came; he saw no living Being, but One was in the bush, in the heat of the flames, who knew him and addressed him by name. Who could this be but a Divine Being? 5. **put off thy shoes**—The direction was in conformity with a usage which was well known to Moses, for the Egyptian priests observed it in their temples and which is observed in all Eastern countries, where the people take off their shoes or sandals as we do our hats. But the Eastern idea is not

precisely the same as the Western. With us the removal of the hat is an expression of reverence for the place we enter or rather of Him who is worshipped there. With them the removal of the shoes is a confession of personal defilement and conscious unworthiness to stand in the presence of unspotted holiness. 6-8. **I am the God . . . come down to deliver**—The reverential awe of Moses must have been relieved by the Divine Speaker (see Matthew, 22. 32), announcing himself in his covenant character and by the welcome intelligence communicated. Moreover, the time as well as all the circumstances of this miraculous appearance were such as to give him an illustrious display of God's faithfulness to his promises. The period of Israel's journey and affliction in Egypt had been predicted (Genesis, 15. 13), and it was during the last year of the term which had still to run that the Lord appeared in the burning bush. 10-22. **Come now, therefore, and I will send thee**—Considering the patriotic views that had formerly animated the breast of Moses, we might have anticipated that no mission could have been more welcome to his heart than to be employed in the national emancipation of Israel. But he evinced great reluctance to it and stated a variety of objections, all of which were successively met and removed, and the happy issue of his labours was minutely described.

## CHAPTER IV.

1-31. MIRACULOUS CHANGE OF THE ROD, &c. 1. **But, behold**—*Hebrew*, "If," "perhaps," "they will not believe me." What evidence can I produce of my Divine mission? There was still a want of full confidence, not in the character and Divine power of his employer, but in His presence and power always accompanying Him. He insinuated that his communication might be rejected and himself treated as an impostor. 2. **The Lord said . . . What is that in thine hand?**—The question was put not to elicit information which God required, but to draw the particular attention of Moses. **A rod**—probably the shepherd's crook—among the Arabs, a long staff, with a curved head, varying from three to six feet in length. 6. **Put now thine hand into thy bosom**—the open part of his outer robe, worn about the girdle. 9. **take of the water of the river**—Nile. Those miracles, two of which were wrought then, and the third to be performed on his arrival in Goshen, were at first designed to encourage himself as satisfactory proofs of his Divine mission, and to be repeated for the special confirmation of his embassy before the Israelites. 10-13. **I am not eloquent**—It is supposed that Moses laboured under a natural defect of utterance, or had a difficulty in the free and fluent expression of his ideas in the Egyptian language, which he had long disused. This new objection was also overruled, but still Moses, who foresaw the manifold difficulties of the undertaking, was anxious to be freed from the responsibility. 14. **the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses**—The Divine Being is not subject to ebullitions of passion; but his displeasure was manifested by transferring the honour of the

priesthood, which would otherwise have been bestowed on Moses, to Aaron, who was from this time destined to be the head of the house of Levi (1 Chronicles, 23. 13). Marvellous had been his condescension and patience in dealing with Moses; and now every remaining scruple was removed by the unexpected and welcome intelligence that his brother Aaron was to be his colleague. God knew from the beginning what Moses would do, but he reserves this motive to the last as the strongest to rouse his languid heart, and Moses now fully and cordially complied with the call. If we are surprised at his backwardness amid all the signs and promises that were given him, we must admire his candour and honesty in recording it. 18. **Moses . . . returned to Jethro** — Being in his service, it was right to obtain his consent, but Moses evinced piety, humility, and prudence, in not divulging the special object of his journey. 19. **all the men are dead which sought thy life** — The death of the Egyptian monarch took place in the four hundred and twenty-ninth year of the Hebrew sojourn in that land, and that event, according to the law of Egypt, took off his proscription of Moses, if it had been publicly issued. 20. **Moses took his wife and sons, and set them upon an ass** — *Septuagint*, “asses.” Those animals are not now used in the desert of Sinai, except by the Arabs for short distances. **returned** — entered on his journey toward Egypt. **he took the rod of God** — so called from its being to be appropriated to His service, and because whatever miracles it might be employed in performing would be wrought not by its inherent properties, but by a Divine power following on its use. (Cf. Acts, 3. 12.) 24. **inn** — *Hebrew*, a halting place for the night. **the Lord met him, and sought to kill him** — *i. e.*, he was either overwhelmed with mental distress or overtaken by a sudden and dangerous malady. The narrative is obscure, but the meaning seems to be, that, led during his illness to a strict self-examination, he was deeply pained and grieved at the thought of having, to please his wife, postponed or neglected the circumcision of one of his sons, probably the younger. To dishonour that sign and seal of the covenant was criminal in any Hebrew, peculiarly so in one destined to be the leader and deliverer of the Hebrews; and he seems to have felt his sickness as a merited chastisement for his sinful omission. Concerned for her husband’s safety, Zipporah overcomes her maternal feelings of aversion to the painful rite, performs herself, by means of one of the sharp flints with which part of the desert abounds, an operation which her husband, on whom the duty devolved, was unable to do, and having brought the bloody evidence, exclaimed in the painful excitement of her feelings that from love to him, she had risked the life of her child. [CALVIN, BULLINGER, ROSENMULLER.] 26. **So he let him go** — Moses recovered; but the remembrance of this critical period in his life would stimulate the Hebrew legislator to enforce a faithful attention to the right of circumcision, when it was established as a Divine ordinance in Israel, and made their peculiar distinction as a people. 27. **Aaron met him in the mount of God and kissed him** — After a separation of forty years, their meeting would be mutually happy. Similar are the salutations of Arab friends wh...



they meet in the desert still ; conspicuous is the kiss on each side of the head. 29. **Moses and Aaron went**—toward Egypt, Zipporah and her sons having been sent back. (Cf. ch. 18. 2.) **gathered . . . all the elders**—Aaron was spokesman, and Moses performed the appointed miracles—through which “the people,” *i. e.*, the elders, believed (1 Kings, 17. 24 ; Joshua, 3. 2), and received the joyful tidings of the errand on which Moses had come with devout thanksgiving. Formerly they had slighted the message and rejected the messenger. Formerly Moses had gone in his own strength, now he goes leaning on God, and strong only through faith in Him who had sent him. Israel also had been taught a useful lesson, and it was good for both that they had been afflicted.

## CHAPTER V.

**1-23. FIRST INTERVIEW WITH PHARAOH. 1. Moses and Aaron went in**—As representatives of the Hebrews, they were entitled to ask an audience of the king, and their thorough Egyptian training taught them how and when to seek it. **and told Pharaoh**—when introduced, they delivered a message in the name of the God of Israel. This is the first time He is mentioned by that national appellation in Scripture. It seems to have been used by Divine direction (ch. 4. 2), and designed to put honour on the Hebrews in their depressed condition (Hebrews, 11. 16). **2. Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord**—rather “Jehovah.” Lord was a common name applied to objects of worship ; but Jehovah was a name he had never heard of ; he estimated the character and power of this God by the abject and miserable condition of the worshippers, and concluded that He held as low a rank among the gods as his people did in the nation. To demonstrate the supremacy of the true God over all the gods of Egypt, was the design of the plagues. **I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go**—As his honour and interest were both involved he determined to crush this attempt, and in a tone of insolence, or perhaps profanity, rejected the request for the release of the Hebrew slaves. **3. The God of the Hebrews hath met with us**—Instead of being provoked into reproaches or threats, they mildly assured him that it was not a proposal originating among themselves, but a duty enjoined on them by their God. They had for a long series of years been debarred from the privilege of religious worship, and as there was reason to fear that a continued neglect of Divine ordinances would draw down upon them the judgments of offended heaven, they begged permission to go three days’ journey into the desert—a place of seclusion—where their sacrificial observances would neither suffer interruption nor give umbrage to the Egyptians. In saying this, they concealed their ultimate design of abandoning the kingdom, and by making this partial request at first, they probably wished to try the king’s temper before they disclosed their intention any farther. But they said only what God had put in their mouths (ch. 3. 12, 18), and this legalizes the specific act, while it gives no sanction to the general habit of dissimulation.

[CHALMERS.] 4. **Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? &c.**—Without taking any notice of what they had said, he treated them as ambitious demagogues, who were appealing to the superstitious feelings of the people, to stir up sedition, and diffuse a spirit of discontent, which spreading through so vast a body of slaves, might endanger the peace of the country.

6. **Pharaoh commanded**—It was a natural consequence of the high displeasure created by this interview, that he should put additional burdens on the oppressed Israelites. **taskmasters**—Egyptian overseers, appointed to exact labour of the Israelites. **officers**—Hebrews placed over their brethren, under the taskmasters, precisely analogous to the Arab officers set over the Arab Fellahs, the poor labourers in modern Egypt.

7. **ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick**—The making of bricks appears to have been a government monopoly, as the ancient bricks are nearly all stamped with the name of a king, and they were formed, as they are still in Lower Egypt, of clay mixed with chopped straw, and dried or hardened in the sun. The Israelites were employed in this drudgery; and though they still dwelt in Goshen, and held property in flocks and herds, they were compelled in rotation to serve in the brick-quarries, pressed in alternating groups, just as the *fellaheen* or peasants are marched by press-gangs in the same country still. **let them go and gather straw for themselves, &c.**—The enraged despot did not issue orders to do an impracticable thing. The Egyptian reapers in the corn-harvest were accustomed merely to cut off the ears and leave the stalk standing.

8. **tale**—an appointed number of bricks. The materials of their labour were to be no longer supplied, and yet, as the same amount of produce was exacted daily, it is impossible to imagine more aggravated cruelty—a more perfect specimen of Oriental despotism.

12. **So the people were scattered**—It was an immense grievance to the labourers individually, but there would be no hindrance from the husbandmen whose fields they entered, as almost all the lands of Egypt were in the possession of the crown (Genesis, 47. 20).

13-19. **taskmasters hastened them . . . officers . . . beaten**—As the nearest fields were bared, and the people had to go farther for stubble, it was impossible for them to meet the demand by the usual tale of bricks. “The beating of the officers is just what might have been expected from an Eastern tyrant, especially in the valley of the Nile, as it appears from the monuments, that ancient Egypt, like modern China, was principally governed by the stick.” [TAYLOR.] “The mode of beating was by the offender being laid flat on the ground, and generally held by the hands and feet while the chastisement was administered.” [WILKINSON.] (Deuteronomy, 25. 2.) A picture representing the Hebrews on a brick-field, exactly as described in this chapter, was found in an Egyptian tomb at Thebes.

20, 21. **They met Moses . . . The Lord look upon you, and judge**—Thus the deliverer of Israel found that this patriotic interference did, in the first instance, only aggravate the evil he wished to remove, and that instead of receiving the gratitude, he was loaded with the reproaches of his countrymen. But as the greatest darkness is

immediately before the dawn, so the people of God are often plunged into the deepest affliction when on the eve of their deliverance, and so it was in this case.

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-13. RENEWAL OF THE PROMISE. I. Lord said unto Moses—** The Lord, who is long suffering and indulgent to the errors and infirmities of his people, made allowance for the mortification of Moses as the result of this first interview, and cheered him with the assurance of a speedy and successful termination to his embassy. **2. And God spake unto Moses—** For his further encouragement, there was made to him an emphatic repetition of the promise (ch. 3. 20). **3. I . . . God Almighty—** All enemies must fall, all difficulties must vanish before my Omnipotent power, and the patriarchs had abundant proofs of this. **but by my name, &c.—** rather, interrogatively, by my name Jehovah was I not known to them? Am not I, the Almighty God who pledged my honour for the fulfillment of the covenant, also the self-existent God who lives to accomplish it. Rest assured, therefore, that I shall bring it to pass. This passage has occasioned much discussion; and it has been thought by many to intimate that as the name Jehovah was not known to the patriarchs, at least in the full bearing or practical experience of it, the honour of the disclosure was reserved to Moses, who was the first sent with a message in the name of Jehovah, and enabled to attest it by a series of public miracles. **9-11. Moses spake so unto the children of Israel—** The increased severities inflicted on the Israelites seem to have so entirely crushed their spirits, as well as irritated them, that they refused to listen to any more communications (ch. 14. 12). Even the faith of Moses himself was faltering; and he would have abandoned the enterprise in despair had he not received a positive command from God to revisit the people without delay, and at the same time renew their demand on the king in a more decisive and peremptory tone. **12. how then shall . . . who am of uncircumcised lips?—** A metaphorical expression among the Hebrews, who, taught to look on the circumcision of any part as denoting perfection, signified its deficiency or unsuitableness by uncircumcision. The words here express how painfully Moses felt his want of utterance or persuasive oratory. He seems to have fallen into the same deep despondency as his brethren, and to be shrinking with nervous timidity from a difficult, if not desperate cause. If he had succeeded so ill with the people, whose dearest interests were all involved, what better hope could he entertain of his making more impression on the heart of a king elated with pride and strong in the possession of absolute power? How strikingly was the indulgent forbearance of God displayed toward his people amid all their backwardness to hail his announcement of approaching deliverance! No perverse complaints or careless indifference on their part retarded the development of His gracious purposes. On the contrary, here, as generally, the course of his Providence is slow in the infliction of

judgment, while it moves more quickly, as it were, when misery is to be relieved or benefits conferred.

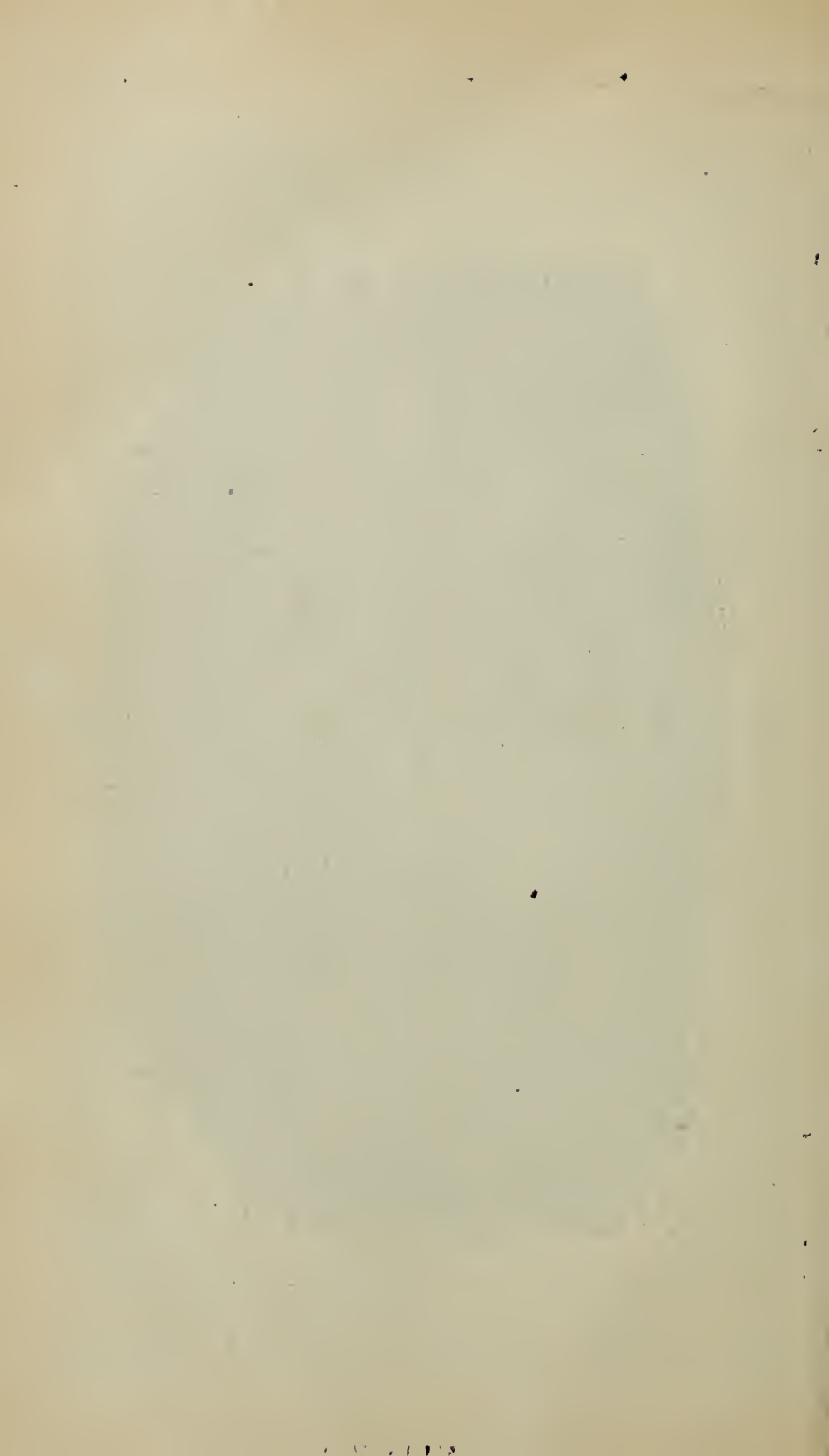
**14-30. THE GENEALOGY OF MOSES.** 14. **These be the heads of their fathers' houses** — chiefs or governors of their houses. The insertion of this genealogical table in this part of the narrative was intended to authenticate the descent of Moses and Aaron. Both of them were commissioned to act so important a part in the events transacted in the court of Egypt, and afterward elevated to so high offices in the government and Church of God, that it was of the utmost importance that their lineage should be accurately traced. Reuben and Simeon being the eldest of Jacob's sons, a passing notice is taken of them, and then the historian advances to the enumeration of the principal persons in the house of Levi. 20. **Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife** — The Septuagint and Syriac versions render it his cousin. 23. **Elisheba** — *i. e.*, Elizabethan. These minute particulars recorded of the family of Aaron, while he has passed over his own, indicate the real modesty of Moses. An ambitious man or an impostor would have acted in a different manner.

## CHAPTER VII.

**1-25. SECOND INTERVIEW WITH PHARAOH.** 1. **the Lord said unto Moses** — He is here encouraged to wait again on the king — not, however, as formerly, in the attitude of a humble suppliant, but now armed with credentials as God's ambassador, and to make his demand in a tone and manner which no earthly monarch or court ever witnessed. **I have made thee a god** — made, *i. e.*, set, appointed; "a god," *i. e.*, he was to act in this business as God's representative, to act and speak in his name, and to perform things beyond the ordinary course of nature. The Orientals familiarly say of a man who is eminently great or wise, "he is a god" among men. **Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet** — *i. e.*, interpreter or spokesman. The one was to be the vicegerent of God, and the other must be considered the speaker throughout all the ensuing scenes, even though his name is not expressly mentioned. 3. **I will harden Pharaoh's heart** — This would be the *result*. But the Divine message would be the *occasion*, not the *cause* of the king's impenitent obduracy. 4, 5. **I may lay mine hand upon Egypt, &c.** The succession of terrible judgments with which the country was about to be scourged would fully demonstrate the supremacy of Israel's God. 7. **Moses was fourscore years** — This advanced age was a pledge that they had not been readily betrayed into a rash or hazardous enterprise, and that under its attendant infirmities they could not have carried through the work on which they were entering had they not been supported by a Divine hand. 8. **When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, &c.** — The king would naturally demand some evidence of their having been sent from God; and as he would expect the ministers of his own gods to do the same works, the contest, in the nature of the case, would be one of miracles. Notice has already been taken of the rod of

Sphinx.





Moses (ch. 4. 2), but rods were carried also by all nobles and official persons in the court of Pharaoh. It was an Egyptian custom, and the rods were symbols of authority or rank. Hence God commanded his servants to use a rod. 10. **Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, &c.** — It is to be presumed that Pharaoh had demanded a proof of their Divine mission. 11. **then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers, &c.** — His object in calling them was to ascertain whether this doing of Aaron's was really a work of Divine power or merely a feat of magical art. The magicians of Egypt in modern times have been long celebrated adepts in charming serpents, and particularly by pressing the nape of the neck, they throw them into a kind of catalepsy which renders them stiff and immovable — thus seeming to change them into a rod. They conceal the serpent about their persons, and by act of legerdemain produce it from their dress, stiff and straight as a rod. Just the same trick was played off by their ancient predecessors, the most renowned of whom, Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy, 3. 8), were called in on this occasion. They had time after the summons to make suitable preparations — and so it appears they succeeded by their "enchantments" in practicing an illusion on the senses. 12. **but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods, &c.** — This was what they could not be prepared for, and the discomfiture appeared in the loss of their rods, which were probably real serpents. 14. **Pharaoh's heart is hardened** — Whatever might have been his first impressions, they were soon dispelled; and when he found his magicians making similar attempts, he concluded that Aaron's affair was a magical deception, the secret of which was not known to his wise men. 15. **Get thee unto Pharaoh** — Now therefore began those appalling miracles of judgment by which the God of Israel, through his ambassadors, proved his sole and unchallengeable supremacy over all the gods of Egypt, and which were the natural phenomena of Egypt, at an unusual season, and in a miraculous degree of intensity. The court of Egypt, whether held at Ramèses, or Memphis, or Tanis in the field of Zoan (Psalm 78. 12), was the scene of those extraordinary transactions, and Moses must have resided during that terrible period in the immediate neighbourhood. **in the morning: lo he goeth out unto the water, &c.** — for the purpose of ablutions or devotions perhaps; for the Nile was an object of superstitious reverence, the patron deity of the country. It might be that Moses had been denied admission into the palace; but be that as it may, the river was to be the subject of the first plague, and therefore he was ordered to repair to its banks with the miracle-working rod, now to be raised, not in demonstration, but in judgment, if the refractory spirit of the king should still refuse consent to Israel's departure for their sacred rites. 17-21. **Aaron lifted up the rod and smote the waters, &c.** — Whether the water was changed into real blood, or only the appearance of it (and Omnipotence could effect the one as easily as the other), this was a severe calamity. How great must have been the disappointment and disgust throughout the land when the river became of a blood-red colour, of which they had a national abhorrence; their favourite beverage became a

nauseous draught, and when the fish, which formed so large an article of food, were destroyed. The immense scale on which the plague was inflicted is seen by its extending to "the streams," or branches of the Nile — to the "rivers" — the canals — the "ponds" and "pools," that which is left after the overflow — the reservoirs, and the many domestic vessels in which the Nile water was kept to filter. And accordingly the sufferings of the people from thirst must have been severe. Nothing could more humble the pride of Egypt than this dishonour brought on their national god. 22. **The magicians . . . did so with their enchantments, &c.** — Little or no pure water could be procured, and therefore their imitation must have been on a small scale — the only drinkable water to be got being dug among the sands. It must have been on a sample or specimen of water dyed red with some colouring matter. But it was sufficient to serve as a pretext or command for the king to turn unmoved and go to his house.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1-15. PLAGUE OF FROGS. 1. the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh** — The duration of the first plague for a whole week must have satisfied all that it was produced not by any accidental causes, but by the agency of Omnipotent power. As a judgment of God, however, it produced no good effect, and Moses was commanded to wait on the king and threaten him, in the event of his continued obstinacy, with the infliction of a new and different plague. As Pharaoh's answer is not given, it may be inferred to have been unfavourable, for the rod was again raised. 2. **I will smite all thy borders with frogs** — Those animals, though the natural spawn of the river, and therefore objects familiar to the people, were on this occasion miraculously multiplied to an amazing extent, and it is probable that the ova of the frogs, which had been previously deposited in the mire and marshes, were miraculously brought to perfection at once. 3. **bed-chamber, . . . bed** — mats strewed on the floor as well as more sumptuous divans of the rich. **ovens** — holes made in the ground and the sides of which are plastered with mortar. **kneading-troughs** — those used in Egypt were bowls of wicker or rush-work. What must have been the state of the people when they could find no means of escape from the cold, damp touch and unsightly presence of the frogs, as they alighted on every article and vessel of food. 5, 6. **Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, &c.** — The miracle consisted in the reptiles leaving their marshes at the very time he commanded them. 7. **the magicians did so with their enchantments** — required great art to make the offensive reptiles appear on any small spot of ground. What they undertook to do already existed in abundance all around. They would better have shown their power by removing the frogs. 8. **Pharaoh called, . . . Entreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me** — The frog which was now used as an instrument of affliction, whether from reverence or abhorrence, was an object of national supersti-



tion with the Egyptians: the god Ptha being represented with a frog's head.—But the vast numbers, together with their stench, made them an intolerable nuisance, so that the king was so far humbled as to promise that if Moses would intercede for their removal he would consent to the departure of Israel, and in compliance with this appeal, they were withdrawn at the very hour named by the monarch himself. But many, while suffering the consequences of their sins, make promises of amendment and obedience which they afterward forget, and so Pharaoh, when he saw there was a respite, was again hardened.

**16-19. PLAGUE OF LICE.** 16. **smite the dust of the land, &c.**—Aaron's rod, by the direction of Moses, who was commanded by God, was again raised, and the land was filled with gnats, mosquitoes—that is the proper meaning of the original term. In ordinary circumstances they embitter life in Eastern countries, and therefore the *terrible* nature of this infliction on Egypt may be judged of when no precautions could preserve from their painful sting. The very smallness and insignificance of these fierce insects made them a dreadful scourge. The magicians never attempted any imitation, and what neither the blood of the river nor the nuisance of the frogs had done, the visitation of this tiny enemy constrained them to acknowledge “this is the finger of God,” properly “gods,” for they spoke as heathens.

**20-32. PLAGUE OF FLIES.** 20. **Rise up early . . . Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water, &c.**—Pharaoh still appearing obdurate, Moses was ordered to meet him while walking on the banks of the Nile, and repeat his request for the liberation of Israel, threatening, in case of continued refusal, to cover every house, from the palace to the cottage, with swarms of flies—while, as a proof of the power that accomplished this judgment, the land of Goshen should be exempted from the calamity. The appeal was equally vain as before, and the predicted evil overtook the country in the form of what was not “flies” such as we are accustomed to, but divers sorts of flies (Psalm 78. 45), the gad-fly, the dog-fly, the cockroach, the Egyptian beetle, for all these are mentioned by different writers. They are very destructive, some of them inflicting severe bites on animals, others destroying clothes, books, plants, every thing—the worship of flies, particularly of the beetle, was a prominent part of the religion of the ancient Egyptians. The employment of these winged deities to chastize them must have been painful and humiliating to the Egyptians, while it must at the same time have strengthened the faith of the Israelites in the God of their fathers as the only object of worship. 25-32. **Pharaoh called for Moses, . . . and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land, &c.**—Between impatient anxiety to be freed from this scourge, and a reluctance to part with the Hebrew bondsmen, the king followed the course of expediency: he proposed to let them free to engage in their religious rites within any part of the kingdom. But true to his instructions, Moses would accede to no such arrangement, he stated a most valid reason to show the danger of it; and the king having yielded so far as to allow them a brief holiday *across the border*, annexed to this conces-

sion a request that Moses would entreat with Jehovah for the removal of the plague. He promised to do so, and it was removed the following day. But no sooner was the pressure over than the spirit of Pharaoh, like a bent bow, sprang back to its wonted obduracy, and, regardless of his promise, he refused to let the people depart

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-7. MURRAIN OF BEASTS. 3. Behold, the hand of the Lord is on thy cattle** — A fifth application was made to Pharaoh in behalf of the Israelites by Moses, who was instructed to tell him that, if he persisted in opposing their departure, a pestilence would be sent amongst all the flocks and herds of the Egyptians, while those of the Israelites would be spared. As he showed no intention of keeping his promise, he was still a mark for the arrows from the Almighty's quiver, and the threatened plague of which he was forewarned was executed. But it is observable, that in this instance it was not inflicted through the instrumentality or waving of Aaron's rod, but directly by the hand of the Lord, and the fixing of the precise time tended still further to determine the true character of the calamity (Jeremiah, 12. 4). **all the cattle of Egypt died** — not absolutely every beast, for we find (*v.* 19. 21) that there were still some; but a great many died of each herd — the mortality was frequent and wide-spread. The adaptation of this judgment consisted in the Egyptians venerating the more useful animals, such as the ox, the cow, and the ram; in all parts of the country temples were reared and divine honours paid to these domesticated beasts, and thus while the pestilence caused a great loss in money, it struck a heavy blow at their superstition. **7. Pharaoh sent . . . there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead** — The dispatch of confidential messengers indicates that he would not give credit to vague reports, and we may conclude that some impression had been made on his mind by that extraordinary exemption, but it was neither a good nor a permanent impression. His pride and obstinacy were in no degree subdued.

**8-17. PLAGUE OF BOILS. 8. Take to you handfuls of ashes, &c.** — The next plague assailed the persons of the Egyptians, and it appeared in the form of ulcerous eruptions upon the skin and flesh (Leviticus, 13. 20; 2 Kings, 20. 7; Job, 2. 7). That this epidemic did not arise from natural causes was evident from its taking effect from the particular action of Moses done in the sight of Pharaoh. The attitude he assumed was similar to that of Eastern magicians, who, "when they pronounce an imprecation on an individual, a village, or a country, take the ashes of cows' dung (that is, from a common fire) and *throw them in the air*, saying to the objects of their displeasure, such a sickness or such a curse shall come upon you." [ROBERTS.] Moses took ashes from the furnace — *Hebrew*, brick-kiln. The magicians being sufferers in their own persons, could do nothing, though they had been called; and as the brick-kiln was one of the principal instruments of oppression to the Israelites, it was now converted into a means of

chastisement to the Egyptians, who were made to read their sin in their punishment.

**18-35. PLAGUE OF HAIL.** 18. **I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, &c.**—The seventh plague which Pharaoh's hardened heart provoked was that of hail, a phenomenon which must have produced the greatest astonishment and consternation in Egypt, as rain and hailstones, accompanied by thunder and lightning, were very rare occurrences. **such as hath not been in Egypt**—In the Delta, or lower Egypt, where the scene is laid, rain occasionally falls between January and March—hail is not unknown, and thunder sometimes heard. But a storm, not only exhibiting all these elements, but so terrific, that hailstones fell of immense size, thunder pealed in awful volleys, and lightning swept the ground like fire, was an unexampled calamity. 20, 21. **He that feared the word of the Lord . . . regarded not, &c.**—Due premonition, it appears, had been publicly given of the impending tempest—the cattle seem to have been sent out to graze, which is from January to April, when alone pasturage can be obtained, and accordingly the cattle were in the fields. This storm occurring at that season, not only struck universal terror into the minds of the people, but occasioned the destruction of all—people and cattle—which, in neglect of the warning, had been left in the fields, as well as of all vegetation. It was the more appalling that hailstones in Egypt are small and of little force—lightning also is scarcely ever known to produce fatal effects, and to enhance the wonder, not a trace of any storm was found in Goshen. 31, 32. **the flax and the barley was smitten, &c.**—The peculiarities that are mentioned in these cereal products arise from the climate and physical constitution of Egypt. In that country flax and barley are almost ripe when wheat and rye (spelt) are green. And hence the flax must have been "bolled"—*i. e.*, risen in stalk or podded in February, thus fixing the particular month when the event took place. Barley ripens about a month earlier than wheat. Flax and barley are generally ripe in March, wheat and rye (properly, spelt in April.) 27-35. **Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said, I have sinned**—This awful display of Divine displeasure did seriously impress the mind of Pharaoh, and, under the weight of his convictions, he humbles himself to confess he has done wrong in opposing the Divine will. At the same time he calls for Moses to intercede for cessation of the calamity. Moses accedes to his earnest wishes, and this most awful visitation ended. But his repentance proved a transient feeling, and his obduracy soon became as great as before.

## CHAPTER X.

**1-20. PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS.** 1. **show these my signs, &c.**—Sinners even of the worst description are to be admonished, even though there may be little hope of amendment, and hence those striking miracles that carried so clear and conclusive demonstration of the being and character of the true God, were performed in lengthened series before Pharaoh to leave him without excuse,

when judgment should be finally executed. 2. **and that thou mayest tell . . . of thy son, and of thy son's son, &c.** — There was a further and higher reason for the infliction of those awful judgments, *viz.*, that the knowledge of them there, and the permanent record of them still might furnish a salutary and impressive lesson to the Church down to the latest ages. Wordly historians might have described them as extraordinary occurrences that marked this era of Moses in ancient Egypt. But we are taught to trace them to their cause; the judgments of Divine wrath on a grossly idolatrous king and nation. 4. **to-morrow will I bring the locusts** — Moses was commissioned to renew the request so often made and denied, with an assurance that an unfavorable answer would be followed on the morrow by an invasion of locusts. This species of insect resembles a large, spotted, red and black, double-winged grasshopper, about three inches or less in length, with the two hind legs working like hinged springs of immense strength and elasticity. Perhaps no more terrible scourge was ever brought on a land than those voracious insects, which fly in such countless numbers as to darken the land which they infest, and on whatever place they alight, they convert it into a waste and barren desert, stripping the ground of its verdure, the trees of their leaves and bark, and producing in a few hours a degree of desolation, which it requires the lapse of years to repair. 7-II. **Pharaoh's servants said** — Many of his courtiers must have suffered serious losses from the late visitations, and the prospect of such a calamity as that which was threatened, and the magnitude of which former experience enabled them to realize, led them to make a strong remonstrance with the king. Finding himself not seconded by his counselors in his continued resistance, he recalled Moses and Aaron, and having expressed his consent to their departure, inquired who were to go? The prompt and decisive reply, "all:" neither man nor beast shall remain, raised a storm of indignant fury in the breast of the proud king; he would permit the grown up men to go away. But no other terms would be listened to. **they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence, &c.** — In the East, when a person of authority and rank feels annoyed by a petition which he is unwilling to grant, he makes a signal to his attendants, who rush forward, and seizing the obnoxious suppliant by the neck, drag him out of the chamber with violent haste. Of such a character was the impassioned scene in the court of Egypt, when the king had wrought himself into such a fit of uncontrollable fury as to treat ignominiously the two venerable representatives of the Hebrew people. 13. **the Lord brought an east wind** — The rod of Moses was again raised, and the locusts came. They are natives of the desert, and are only brought by an east wind into Egypt, where they sometimes come in sun-obscuring clouds, destroying in a few days every green blade in the track they traverse. Man, with all his contrivances, can do nothing to protect himself from the overwhelming invasion. Egypt has often suffered from locusts. But the one that followed the wave of the miraculous rod was altogether unexampled. Pharaoh, fearing irretrievable ruin to his country, sent in haste for Moses, and con-

fessing his sin, implored the intercession of Moses, who entreated the Lord, and a "mighty strong west wind took away the locusts."

**21-29. PLAGUE OF DARKNESS.** 21. **Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness** — Whatever secondary means were employed in producing it, whether thick clammy fogs and vapours, according to some; a sand storm, or the chamsin, according to others; it was such that it could be almost perceived by the organs of touch, and so protracted as to continue for three days, which the chamsin does. [HENGSTENBERG.] The appalling character of this calamity consisted in this, that the sun was an object of Egyptian idolatry; that the pure and serene sky of that country was never marred by the appearance of a cloud. And here, too, the Lord made a marked difference between Goshen and the rest of Egypt. 24-26. **Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord** — Terrified by the preternatural darkness, the stubborn king relents, and proposes another compromise — the flocks and herds to be left as hostages for their return. But the crisis is approaching, and Moses insists on every iota of demands. The cattle would be needed for sacrifice — how many or how few could not be known till their arrival at the scene of religious observance. But the emancipation of Israel from Egyptian bondage was to be complete. 28. **Pharaoh said, . . . Get thee from me** — The calm firmness of Moses provoked the tyrant. Frantic with disappointment and rage, with offended and desperate malice, he ordered him from his presence, and forbade him ever to return. 29. **Moses said, Thou hast spoken well.**

## CHAPTER XI.

**1-10. DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN THREATENED.** 1. **the Lord said** — rather HAD said unto Moses. It may be inferred, therefore, that he had been apprized that the crisis was now arrived, that the next plague would so effectually humble and alarm the mind of Pharaoh, that he would "*thrust* them out hence altogether;" and thus the word of Moses (ch. 10. 29), must be regarded as a prediction. 2, 3. **Speak now in the ears of the people** — These verses, describing the communication which had been made in private to Moses, are inserted here as a parenthesis, and will be considered (ch. 12. 35). 4. **Thus saith the Lord, About midnight** — Here is recorded the announcement of the last plague made in the most solemn manner to the king, on whose hardened heart all his painful experience had hitherto produced no softening, at least no permanently good effect. **will I go out into the midst of Egypt** — language used after the manner of men. 5. **all the first-born in the land . . . shall die** — The time, the suddenness, the dreadful severity of this coming calamity, and the peculiar description of victims, both amongst men and beasts, on whom it was to fall, would all contribute to aggravate its character. **the maid-servant that is behind the mill** — The grinding of the meal for daily use in every household is commonly done by female slaves, and is considered the lowest employment. Two portable millstones are used

for the purpose, *o.* which the uppermost is turned by a small wooden handle, and during the operation the maid sits behind the mill. 6. **shall be a great cry throughout all the land**—In the case of a death, people in the East set up loud wailings, and imagination may conceive what “a great cry” would be raised when death would invade every family in the kingdom. 7. **against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue**—No town or village in Egypt or in the East generally is free from the nuisance of dogs, who prowl about the streets and make the most hideous noise at any passengers at night. What an emphatic significance does the knowledge of this circumstance give to this fact in the sacred record, that on the awful night that was coming, when the air should be rent with the piercing shrieks of mourners, so great and universal would be the panic inspired by the hand of God, that not a dog would move his tongue against the children of Israel. 8. **all these thy servants shall . . . bow down themselves unto me**—This should be the effect of the universal terror; the hearts of the proudest would be humbled and do reverential homage to God, in the person of His representative. **went out . . . in a great anger**—Holy and righteous indignation at the duplicity, repeated falsehood, and hardened impenitence of the king; and this strong emotion was stirred in the bosom of Moses, not at the ill reception given to himself, but the dishonour done to God (Matthew, 19. 8 · Ephesians, 4. 26).

## CHAPTER XII.

1-10. THE PASSOVER INSTITUTED. 1. **the Lord spake unto Moses**—rather *had* spoken unto Moses and Aaron; for it is evident that the communication here described must have been made to them on or before the tenth of the month. 2. **this month shall be unto you the beginning of months**—the first not only in order, but in estimation. It had formerly been the seventh according to the reckoning of the civil year, which began in September, and continued unchanged, but it was thenceforth to stand first in the national religious year which began in March, April. 3. **Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel**—The recent events had prepared the Israelitish people for a crisis in their affairs, and they seem to have yielded implicit obedience at this time to Moses. It is observable that, amid all the hurry and bustle of such a departure, their serious attention was to be given to a solemn act of religion. **a lamb for an house**—a kid might be taken (*v.* 5). The service was to be a domestic one, for the deliverance was to be from an evil threatened to every house in Egypt. 4. **if the household be too little for the lamb, &c.**—It appears from Josephus that ten persons were required to make up the proper paschal communion. **every man, according to his eating**—It is said that the quantity eaten of the paschal lamb, by each individual, was about the size of an olive. 5. **lamb . . . without blemish**—The smallest deformity or defect made a lamb unfit for sacrifice—a type of Christ (Hebrews, 7. 26; 1 Peter, 1. 19). **a male of the first year**—Christ

in the prime of life. 6. **keep it up until the fourteenth day, &c.**— Being selected from the rest of the flock it was to be separated four days before sacrifice; and for the same length of time was Christ under examination and his spotless innocence declared before the world. **kill it in the evening** — *i. e.* the interval between the sun's beginning to decline, and sunset, corresponding to our three o'clock in the afternoon. 7. **take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, &c.** — as a sign of safety to those within. The posts must be considered of tents, in which the Israelites generally lived, though some might be in houses. Though the Israelites were sinners as well as the Egyptians, God was pleased to accept the substitution of a lamb — the blood of which being seen *sprinkled* on the door-posts, procured them mercy. It was to be on the side-posts and upper door-posts, where it might be *looked to*, not on the threshold, where it might be trodden under foot. This was an emblem of the blood of sprinkling (Hebrews, 12. 24, 29). 8. **roast with fire** — for the sake of expedition; and this difference was always observed between the cooking of the paschal lamb and the other offerings (2 Chronicles, 35. 13). **unleavened bread** — also for the sake of dispatch (Deuteronomy, 16. 3), but as a kind of corruption (Luke, 12. 1), there seems to have been a typical meaning under it (1 Corinthians, 5. 8). **bitter herbs** — *lit.*, bitters — to remind the Israelites of their affliction in Egypt, and morally of the trials to which God's people are subject on account of sin. 9. **Eat not of it raw** — *i. e.*, with any blood remaining — a caveat against conformity to idolatrous practices. It was to be roasted whole, not a bone to be broken, and this pointed to Christ (John, 19. 36). 10. **let nothing of it remain until the morning** — which might be applied in a superstitious manner, or allowed to putrefy, which in a hot climate would speedily have ensued; and which was not becoming in what had been offered to God.

11-14. THE RITE OF THE PASSOVER. 11. **thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet** — as prepared for a journey. The first was done by the skirts of the loose outer cloth being drawn up and fastened in the girdle, so as to leave the leg and knee free for motion. As to the other the Orientals never wear shoes in-doors, and the ancient Egyptians, as appears from the monuments, did not usually wear either shoes or sandals. These injunctions seem to have applied chiefly to the first celebration of the rite. **it is the Lord's passover** — called by this name from the blood-marked dwellings of the Israelites being *passed* over figuratively by the destroying angel. 12. **smite . . . gods of Egypt** — perhaps used here for princes and grandees. But, according to Jewish tradition, the idols of Egypt were all on that night broken in pieces (See Numbers, 33. 4; Isaiah, 19. 1). 13, 14. **for a memorial, &c.** — The close analogy traceable in all points between the Jewish and Christian passovers is seen also in the circumstance that both festivals were instituted before the events they were to commemorate had transpired.

15-51. UNLEAVENED BREAD. 15. **Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, &c.** — This was to commemorate another circumstance in the departure of the Israelites, who were urged to

leave so hurriedly that their dough was unleavened (*v.* 39), and they had to eat unleavened cakes (Deuteronomy, 16. 3). The greatest care was always taken by the Jews to free their houses from leaven—the owner searching every corner of his dwelling with a lighted candle. A figurative allusion to this is made (1 Corinthians, 5. 7). The exclusion of leaven for seven days would not be attended with inconvenience in the East, where the usual leaven is dough kept till it becomes sour, and it is kept from one day to another for the purpose of preserving leaven in readiness. Thus even were there none in all the country, it could be got within twenty-four hours. [HARMER.] **that soul shall be cut off**—Excommunicated from the community and privileges of the chosen people. 16. **there shall be an holy convocation**—*lit., calling* of the people, which was done by sound of trumpet (Numbers, 10. 2), a sacred assembly—for these days were to be regarded as Sabbaths—excepting only that meat might be cooked on them (ch. 16. 23). 17. **ye shall observe, &c.**—The seven days of this feast were to commence the day after the passover. It was a distinct festival following that feast; but although this feast was instituted like the passover *before* the departure, the observance of it did not take place till *after*. 19. **stranger**—No foreigner could partake of the passover, unless circumcised; the “stranger” specified as admissible to the privilege must, therefore, be considered a Gentile *proselyte*. 21-25. **Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, &c.**—Here are given special directions for the observance. **hyssop**—a small red moss. [HASSELQUIST.] The caper-plant. [ROYLE.] It was used in the sprinkling, being well adapted for such purposes, as it grows in bushes—putting out plenty of suckers from a single root. And it is remarkable that it was ordained in the arrangements of an all-wise Providence that the Roman soldiers should undesignedly, on their part, make use of this symbolical plant to Christ when, as our passover, he was sacrificed for us. **None . . . shall go out at the door of his house until the morning**—This regulation was peculiar to the first celebration, and intended, as some think, to prevent any suspicion attaching to them of being agents in the impending destruction of the Egyptians; there is an allusion to it (Isaiah, 26. 20). 26. **when your children shall say, . . . What mean ye by this service**—Independently of some observances which were not afterwards repeated, the usages practiced at this yearly commemorative feast were so peculiar that the curiosity of the young would be stimulated, and thus parents have an excellent opportunity, which they were enjoined to embrace, for instructing each rising generation in the origin and leading facts of the national faith. 27, 28. **The people bowed the head, and worshipped**—All the preceding directions were communicated through the elders, and the Israelites being deeply solemnized by the influence of past and prospective events, gave prompt and faithful obedience. 29. **at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt**—At the moment when the Israelites were observing the newly instituted feast in the singular manner described, the threatened calamity overtook the Egyptians. It is more easy to imagine than describe the con-



fusion and terror of that people suddenly roused from sleep and enveloped in darkness — none could assist their neighbours, when the groans of the dying and the wild shrieks of mourners were heard everywhere around. The hope of every family was destroyed at a stroke. This judgment, terrible though it was, evinces the equity of Divine retribution. For eighty years the Egyptians had caused the male children of the Israelites to be cast into the river, and now all their own first-born fell under the stroke of the destroying angel. They were made, in the justice of God, to feel something of what they had made His people feel. Many a time have the hands of sinners made the snares in which they have themselves been entangled, and fallen into the pit which they have dug for the righteous. “Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” 30. **there was not a house where there was not one dead** — Perhaps this statement is not to be taken absolutely. The Scriptures frequently use the words “all,” “none,” in a comparative sense — and so in this case. There would be many a house in which there would be no child, and many in which the first-born would be already dead. What is to be understood is, that almost every house in Egypt had a death in it. 31. **called for Moses and Aaron** — a striking fulfillment of the words of Moses (ch. 11. 8), and showing that they were spoken under Divine suggestion. 32. **also take your flocks, &c.** — All the terms the king had formerly insisted on were now departed from, his pride had been effectually humbled. Appalling judgments in such rapid succession showed plainly that the hand of God was against him. His own family bereavement had so crushed him to the earth that he not only showed impatience to rid his kingdom of such formidable neighbours, but even begged an interest in their prayers. 34. **people took . . . kneading-troughs** — Having lived so long in Egypt, they must have been in the habit of using the utensils common in that country. The Egyptian kneading-trough was a bowl of wicker or rush work, and it admitted of being hastily wrapped up with the dough in it and slung over the shoulder in their *hykes* or loose upper garments. 35. **children of Israel borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver** — When the Orientals go to their sacred festivals, they always put on their *best jewels*. The Israelites themselves thought they were only going three days’ journey to hold a feast unto the Lord, and in these circumstances it would be easy for them to *borrow* what was necessary for a sacred festival. But “*borrow*” conveys a wrong meaning. The word rendered *borrowed* signifies properly to *ask, demand, require*. The Israelites had been kept in great poverty, having received little or no wages. They now insisted on full remuneration for all their labour, and it was paid in light and valuable articles adapted for convenient carriage. 36. **the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians** — Such a dread of them was inspired into the universal minds of the Egyptians, that whatever they asked was readily given. **spoiled the Egyptians** — The accumulated earnings of many years being paid them at this moment, the Israelites were suddenly enriched, according to the promise made to Abraham (Genesis, 15. 14), and they left the country like a victorious army laden with

spoil (Psalm 105.37; Ezekiel, 39. 10). 37. **The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses**—now generally identified with the ancient Heroopolis, and fixed at the modern *Abu-Keisheid*. This position agrees with the statement that the scene of the miraculous judgments against Pharaoh was “in the field of Zoan.” And it is probable that, in expectation of their departure, which the king, on one pretext or another, delayed, the Israelites had been assembled there as a general rendezvous. In journeying from Rameses to Palestine, there was a choice of two routes—the one along the shores of the Mediterranean to El-Arish, the other more circuitous round the head of the Red Sea and the desert of Sinai. The latter Moses was directed to take (ch. 13. 17). **to Succoth**—*i. e.*, booths, probably nothing more than a place of temporary encampment. The Hebrew word signifies a covering or shelter, formed by the boughs of trees; and hence, in memory of this lodgment, the Israelites kept the feast of tabernacles yearly in this manner. **six hundred thousand . . . men**—It appears from Numbers, 1, that the enumeration is of men above twenty years of age. Assuming, what is now ascertained by statistical tables, that the numbers of males above that age is as nearly as possible the half of the total number of males, the whole male population of Israel, on this computation, would amount to 1,200,000; and adding an equal number for women and children, the aggregate number of Israelites who left Egypt would be 2,400,000. 38. **a mixed multitude went with them**—*lit.*, a great rabble (see also Numbers, 11. 4; Deuteronomy, 26. 11); slaves, persons in the lowest grades of society, partly natives and partly foreigners, bound close to them as companions in misery, and gladly availing themselves of the opportunity to escape in the crowd. (Cf. Zechariah, 8. 23.) 40. **the sojourning of the children of Israel . . . was four hundred and thirty years**—The *Septuagint* renders it thus: “The sojourning of the children and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt.” These additions are important, for the period of sojourn in Egypt did not exceed 215 years; but if we reckon from the time that Abraham entered Canaan and the promise was made in which the sojourn of his posterity in Egypt was announced, this makes up the time to 430 years. 41. **even the self-same day**—implying an exact and literal fulfillment of the predicted period. 49. **One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger**—This regulation displays the liberal spirit of the Hebrew institutions. Any foreigner might obtain admission to the privileges of the nation on complying with their sacred ordinances. In the Mosaic equality as the Christian dispensation privilege and duty were inseparably conjoined.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1, 2. THE FIRST-BORN SANCTIFIED. 2. **Sanctify unto me all the first-born**—To sanctify means to consecrate, to set apart from a common to a sacred use. The foundation of this duty rested on the fact, that the Israelites having had their first-born preserved by

a distinguishing act of grace from the general destruction that overtook the families of the Egyptians, were bound in token of gratitude to consider them as the Lord's peculiar property. (Cf. Hebrews, 12. 23.)

**3-10. MEMORIAL OF THE PASSOVER.** 3. **Moses said unto the people, Remember this day**—The day that gave them a national existence and introduced them into the privileges of independence and freedom, deserved to live in the memories of the Hebrews and their posterity; and, considering the signal interposition of God displayed in it, to be held not only in perpetual, but devout remembrance. **house of bondage**—*lit.*, house of slaves—*i. e.*, a servile and degrading condition. **for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place**—The emancipation of Israel would never have been obtained except it had been wrung from the Egyptian tyrant by the appalling judgment of God, as had been at the outset of his mission announced to Moses (ch. 3. 19). **There shall no leavened bread, &c.**—The words are elliptical, and the meaning of the clause may be paraphrased thus: "For by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place, in such haste that there could or should be no leavened bread eaten." 4. **month Abib**—*lit.*, a green ear, and hence the month Abib is the month of green ears, corresponding to the middle of our March. It was the best season for undertaking a journey to the desert-region of Sinai, especially with flocks and herds; for then the winter torrents have subsided, and the wadys are covered with an early and luxuriant verdure. 5-7. **when the Lord shall bring thee**—the passover is here instituted as a permanent festival of the Israelites. It was, however, only a prospective observance; we read of only one celebration of the passover during the protracted sojourn in the wilderness; but on their settlement in the promised land, the season was hallowed as a sacred anniversary, in conformity with the directions here given. 8. **thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying**—The establishment of this and the other sacred festivals presented the best opportunities of instructing the young in a knowledge of His gracious doings to their ancestors in Egypt. 9. **It shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, &c.**—There is no reason to believe that the Oriental tattooing—the custom of staining the hands with the power of Henna, as Eastern females now do—is here referred to. Nor is it probable that either this practice or the phylacteries of the Pharisees—parchment scrolls, which were worn on their wrists and foreheads—had so early an existence. The words are to be considered only as a figurative mode of expression. **that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth, &c.**—*i. e.*, that it may be the subject of frequent conversation and familiar knowledge among the people.

**11-16. FIRSTLINGS OF BEASTS.** 12. **every firstling, &c.**—The injunction respecting the consecration of the first-born, as here repeated, with some additional circumstances. The firstlings of clean beasts, such as lambs, kids and calves, if males, were to be devoted to God, and employed in sacrifice. Those unclean beasts, as the ass's colt, being unfit for sacrifice, were to be redeemed (Numbers, 18. 15).

**17-21. JOURNEY FROM EGYPT.** 17. **God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near, &c.** — The shortest and most direct route from Egypt to Palestine was the usual caravan road that leads by Belbeis, El-Arish, to Ascalon and Gaza. The Philistines, who then possessed the latter, would have been sure to dispute their passage, for between them and the Israelites there was a hereditary feud (1 Chronicles, 7. 21, 22); and so early a commencement of hostilities would have discouraged or dismayed the unwarlike band which Moses led. Their faith was to be exercised and strengthened, and from the commencement of their travels we observe the same careful proportion of burdens and trials to their character and state, as the gracious Lord shows to his people still in that spiritual journey of which the former was typical. 18. **God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, &c.** — This wondrous expanse of water is a gulf of the Indian ocean. It was called in Hebrew “the weedy sea,” from the forest of marine plants with which it abounds. But the name of the Red Sea is not so easily traced. Some think it was given from its contiguity to the countries of Edom (red), others derive it from its coral rocks, while a third class ascribe the origin of the name to an extremely red appearance of the water in some parts, caused by a numberless multitude of very small mollusca. This sea, at its northern extremity, separates into two smaller inlets—the eastern called anciently the Elantic gulf, now the gulf of Akaba; and the western the Heroopolite gulf, now the gulf of Suez, which, there can be no doubt, extended much more to the north anciently than it does now. It was toward the latter the Israelites marched. **went up harnessed**—*i. e.*, girded, equipped for a long journey. (See Psalm 105. 37.) The margin renders it “five in a rank,” meaning obviously five large divisions, under five presiding officers, according to the usages of all caravans; and a spectacle of such a mighty and motley multitude must have presented an imposing appearance, and its orderly progress could have been effected only by the superintending influence of God. 19. **Moses took the bones of Joseph with him**—in fulfillment of the oath he exacted from his brethren (Genesis, 50. 25, 26). The remains of the other patriarchs—not noticed from their obscurity—were also carried out of Egypt (Acts, 7. 16); and there would be no difficulty as to the means of conveyance—a few camels bearing these precious relics would give a true picture of Oriental customs, such as is still to be seen in the immense pilgrimages to Mecca. 20. **encamped in Etham**—This place is supposed by the most intelligent travelers to be the modern Ajrud, where is a watering place, and which is the third stage of the pilgrim caravans to Mecca. “It is remarkable that either of the different routes eastward from Heliopolis, or southward from Heroopolis, equally admit of Ajrud being Etham. It is twelve miles north-west from Suez, and is literally on the edge of the desert.” [PICTORIAL BIBLE.] 21, 22. **the Lord went before them**—by a visible token of his presence, the Shechinah, in a majestic cloud (Psalm 78. 14; Nehemiah, 9. 12; 1 Corinthians, 10. 1),

called the angel of God (ch. 14. 19; 23. 20-23; Psalm 99. 6, 7; Isaiah, 63. 8, 9).

## CHAPTER XIV.

**1-41. GOD INSTRUCTED THE ISRAELITES AS TO THEIR JOURNEY.**  
**2. Speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp** — The Israelites had now completed their three days' journey, and at Etham the decisive step would have to be taken whether they would celebrate their intended feast and return or march onward by the head of the Red Sea into the desert, with a view to a final departure. They were already on the borders of the desert, and a short march would have placed them beyond the reach of pursuit, as the chariots of Egypt could have made little progress over dry and yielding sand. But at Etham, instead of pursuing their journey eastward, with the sea on their right, they were suddenly commanded to diverge to the south, keeping the gulf on their left; a route which not only detained them lingering on the confines of Egypt, but, in adopting it, they actually turned their backs on the land of which they had set out to obtain the possession. A movement so unexpected, and of which the ultimate design was carefully concealed, could not but excite the astonishment of all, even of Moses himself, although, from his implicit faith in the wisdom and power of his heavenly Guide, he obeyed. The object was to entice Pharaoh to pursue in order that the moral effect, which the judgments on Egypt had produced in releasing God's people from bondage, might be still further extended over the nations by the awful events transacted at the Red Sea. **Pi-hahiroth** — the mouth of the defile or pass, a description well suited to that of Bedea, which extended from the Nile and opens on the shore of the Red Sea. **Migdol** — a fortress or citadel. **Baal-zephon** — some marked site on the opposite or eastern coast. **3. the wilderness hath shut them in** — Pharaoh, who would eagerly watch their movements, was now satisfied that they were meditating flight, and he naturally thought from the error into which they appeared to have fallen by entering that defile, he could intercept them. He believed them now entirely in his power, the mountain chain being on one side, the sea on the other, so that, if he pursued them in the rear, escape seemed impossible. **5. the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, &c.** — Alas, how soon the obduracy of this reprobate king re-appears. He had been convinced but not converted, overawed, but not sanctified, by the appalling judgments of heaven. He bitterly repented of what he now thought a hasty concession. Pride and revenge, the honour of his kingdom, and the interests of his subjects, all prompted him to recall his permission to reclaim those runaway slaves and force them to their wonted labour. Strange that he should yet allow such considerations to obliterate or outweigh all his painful experience of the danger of oppressing that people. But those whom the Lord has doomed to destruction are first infatuated by sin. **6. he made ready his chariot** — His preparations for an immediate and hot pursuit are here described; a

difference is made between "the chosen chariots and the chariots of Egypt." The first, evidently, composed the king's guard, amounting to six hundred, and they are called "chosen," *lit.*, "third men;" three men being allotted to each chariot, the charioteer and two warriors. As to "the chariots of Egypt, the common cars contained only two persons, one for driving and the other for fighting;" sometimes only one person was in the chariot, the driver lashed the reins round his body and fought; infantry being totally unsuitable for a rapid pursuit, and the Egyptians having had no cavalry, the word "riders" is in the grammatical connection applied to war chariots employed, and these were of light construction, open behind and hung on small wheels. 10 **when Pharaoh drew nigh the children of Israel lifted up their eyes** — The great consternation of the Israelites is somewhat astonishing considering their vast superiority in numbers, but their deep dismay and absolute despair at the sight of this armed host receives a satisfactory explanation from the fact that the civilized state of Egyptian society required the absence of all arms, except when they were on service. If the Israelites were entirely unarmed at their departure they could not think of making any resistance. [WILKINSON & HENGSTENBERG.] 13, 14. **Moses said . . . Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord** — Never, perhaps, was the fortitude of a man so severely tried as that of the Hebrew leader in this crisis, exposed as he was to various and inevitable dangers, the most formidable of which was the vengeance of a seditious and desperate multitude; but his meek, unruffled, magnanimous composure, presents one of the sublimest examples of moral courage to be found in history. And whence did his courage arise? He saw the miraculous cloud still accompanying them and his confidence arose solely from the hope of a Divine interposition, although, perhaps, he might have looked for the expected deliverance in every quarter rather than in the direction of the sea. 15-18. **the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me? &c.** — When, in answer to his prayers, he received the Divine command to go forward, he no longer doubted by what kind of miracle the salvation of his mighty charge was to be effected. 19. **the angel of God** — *i. e.*, the pillar of cloud. The slow and silent movement of that majestic column through the air and occupying a position behind them must have excited the astonishment of the Israelites (Isaiah, 58. 8). It was an effectual barrier between them and their pursuers, not only protecting them but concealing their movements. Thus, the same cloud produced light (a symbol of favour) to the people of God, and darkness (a symbol of wrath) to their enemies (Cf. 2 Corinthians, 2. 16) 21. **Moses stretched out his hand, &c.** — The waving of the rod was of great importance on this occasion to give public attestation in the presence of the assembled Israelites, both to the character of Moses and the Divine mission with which he was charged. **the Lord caused . . . a strong east wind all that night** — Suppose a mere ebb-tide caused by the wind, raising the water to a great height on *one side*, still as there was not only "dry land," but, according to the tenor of the sacred narrative, a wall on the right hand and on the left, it would be impossible on

the hypotnesis of such a natural cause to rear the wall on the other. The idea of Divine interposition, therefore, is imperative; and, assuming the passage to have been made at Mount Attakah or at the mouth of Wady-Tawarik, an east wind would cut the sea in that line. The Hebrew word *kedem*, however, rendered in our translation, *East*, means, in its primary signification, *previous*; so that this verse might, perhaps, be rendered, "the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong *previous* wind all that night;" a rendering which would remove the difficulty of supposing the host of Israel marched over on the sand, in the teeth of a rushing column of wind strong enough to heap up the waters as a wall on each side of a dry path and give the intelligible narrative of Divine interference. 22. **the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea, &c.**—It is highly probable that Moses, along with Aaron, first planted his footsteps on the untrodden sand, encouraging the people to follow him without fear of the treacherous walls; and when we take into account the multitudes that followed him, the immense number who, through infancy and old age, were incapable of hastening their movements, together with all the appurtenances of the camp, the strong and steadfast character of the leaders' faith was strikingly manifested (Joshua, 2. 10; 4. 23; Psalm 66. 6; 74. 13; 106. 9; 136. 13; Isaiah, 63. 11-13; 1 Corinthians, 10. 1; Hebrews, 11. 29). 23. **the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea**—From the darkness caused by the intercepting cloud it is probable that they were not aware on what ground they were driving; they heard the sound of the fugitives before them, and they pushed on with the fury of the avengers of blood, without dreaming that they were on the bared bed of the sea. 24. **Lord looked . . . through . . . the cloud and troubled them**—We suppose the fact to have been that the side of the pillar of cloud toward the Egyptians was suddenly, and for a few moments, illuminated with a blaze of light which, coming as it were in a refulgent flash upon the dense darkness which had preceded, so frightened the horses of the pursuers that they rushed confusedly together and became unmanageable. "Let us flee" was the cry that resounded through the broken and trembling ranks, but it was too late, all attempts at flight were vain. [BUSH.] 27. **Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, &c.**—What circumstances could more clearly demonstrate the miraculous character of this transaction than that at the waving of Moses' rod, the dividing waters left the channel dry, and, on his making the same motion on the opposite side, they returned, commingling with instantaneous fury. Is such the character of any ebb-tide? 28. **there remained not so much as one of them**—It is surprising that, with such a declaration, some intelligent writers can maintain there is no evidence of the destruction of Pharaoh himself (Psalm 106. 11). 30. **Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore, &c.**—The tide threw them up and left multitudes of corpses on the beach; a result that brought greater infamy on the Egyptians, that tended, on the other hand, to enhance the triumph of the Israelites, and, doubtless, enriched them with arms which they had not before. The locality of this famous passage has not yet been, and, probably, never will

be, satisfactorily fixed. Some place it in the immediate neighbourhood of Suez; where, they say, the part of the sea is most likely to be affected by "a strong east wind;" where the road from the defile of Migdol (now Muktala) leads directly to this point; and where the sea, not above two miles broad, could be crossed in a short time. The vast majority, however, who have examined the spot, reject this opinion, and fix the passage, as does local tradition, about ten or twelve miles further down the shore at Wady-Tawarik. "The time of the miracle was the whole night, at the season of the year, too, when the night would be about its average length. The sea at that point extends from six-and a-half to eight miles in breadth. There was thus ample time for the passage of the Israelites from any part of the valley, especially considering their excitement and animation by the gracious and wonderful interposition of Providence in their behalf." [WILSON.]

## CHAPTER XV.

**I-27. SONG OF MOSES. I. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel**—The scene of this thanksgiving song is supposed to have been at the landing place, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, at Ayoun Musa, the fountains of Moses. They are situated somewhat farther northward along the shore than the opposite point from which the Israelites set out. But the line of the people would be extended during the passage and one extremity of it would reach as far north as these fountains which would supply them with water on landing. The time when it was sung is supposed to have been the morning after the passage. This song is, by some hundred years, the oldest poem in the world. There is a sublimity and beauty in the language that is unexampled. But its unrivaled superiority arises not solely from the splendour of the diction. Its poetical excellencies have often drawn forth the admiration of the best judges, while the character of the event commemorated, and its being prompted by Divine inspiration, contribute to give it an interest and sublimity peculiar to itself. **I will sing unto the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously**—Considering the state of servitude in which they had been born and bred, and the rude features of character which their subsequent history often displays, it cannot be supposed that the children of Israel generally were qualified to commit to memory or to appreciate the beauties of this inimitable song. But they might perfectly understand its pervading strain of sentiment; and, with the view of suitably improving the occasion, it was thought necessary that all, old and young, should join their united voices in the rehearsal of its words. As every individual had cause, so every individual gave utterance to his feelings of gratitude. **20. Miriam the prophetess**—so called from her receiving Divine revelations (Numbers, 12. 1; Micah, 6. 4), but, in this instance, principally from her being eminently skilled in music, and in this sense the word "prophecy" is sometimes used in Scripture (1 Chronicles, 25. 1; 1 Corinthians, 11. 5). **took a timbrel**—or tabret, a musical



instrument in the form of a hoop, edged round with rings or pieces of brass to make a jingling noise and covered over with tightened parchment like a drum. It was beat with the fingers and corresponds to our tambourine. **all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances** — We shall understand this by attending to the modern customs of the East, where the dance, a slow, grave and solemn gesture, generally accompanied with singing and the sound of the timbrel, is still led by the principal female of the company, the rest imitating her movements and repeating the words of the song as they drop from her lips. 21. **Miriam answered them** — “them,” in the *Hebrew*, is masculine, so that Moses, probably, led the men and Miriam the women, the two bands responding alternately and singing the first verse as a chorus. 22. **wilderness of Shur** — comprehending all the western part of Arabia Petræa. The desert of Etham was a part of it, extending round the northern portion of the Red Sea and a considerable distance along its eastern shore; whereas, the “wilderness of Shur” (now Sudhr) was the designation of all the desert region of Arabia Petræa that lay next to Palestine. 23. **when they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters** — Following the general route of all travelers southward, between the sea and the table-land of the Tih (valley of wandering), Marah is almost universally believed to be what is now called Howarah, in Wady-Amarah, about thirty miles from the place where the Israelites landed on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, a distance quite sufficient for their march of three days. There is no other perennial spring in the intermediate space. The water still retains its ancient character and has a bad name among the Arabs who seldom allow their camels to partake of it. 25. **the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet** — Some travelers have pronounced this to be the Elvah of the Arabs, a shrub in form and flower resembling our hawthorn; others, the berries of the Ghurkhud, a bush found growing around all brackish fountains. But neither of these shrubs are known by the natives to possess such natural virtues. It is far more likely that God miraculously endowed some tree with the property of purifying the bitter water, a tree employed as the medium, but the sweetening was not dependent upon the nature or quality of the tree but the power of God (Cf. John, 9. 6). And hence the “statute and ordinance” that followed, which would have been singularly inopportune if there had no miracle been wrought. **and there he proved them** — God now brought the Israelites into circumstances which would put their faith and obedience to the test (Cf. Genesis, 22. 1). 27. **they came to Elim where were twelve wells of water** — supposed to be what is now called Wady-Ghurandel, the most extensive water course in the western desert, an oasis, adorned with a great variety of trees, among which the palm is still conspicuous and fertilized by a copious stream. It is estimated to be a mile in breadth but stretching out far to the north-east. After the weary travel through the desert this must have appeared a most delightful encampment from its shade and verdure as well as from its abundant supply of sweet water for the thirsty multitude. The palm is called “the

tree" of the desert as its presence is always a sign of water. The palms in this spot are greatly increased in number but the wells are diminished.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**1-36. MURMURS FOR WANT OF BREAD.** 1. **they took their journey from Elim**—where they had remained several days. **came unto the wilderness of Sin**—it appears from Numbers, 32, that several stations are omitted in this historical notice of the journey. This passage represents the Israelites as advanced into the great plain, which, beginning near El-Murkah, extends with a greater or less breadth to almost the extremity of the peninsula. In its broadest part northward of Tur it is called El-Kaa, which is probably the desert of Sin. [ROBINSON.] 2. **the whole congregation . . . murmured against Moses and Aaron**—Modern travelers through the desert of Sinai are accustomed to take as much as is sufficient for the sustenance of men and beasts during forty days. The Israelites having been rather more than a month on their journey, their store of corn or other provisions was altogether or nearly exhausted; and there being no prospect of procuring any means of subsistence in the desert, except some wild olives and wild honey (Deuteronomy, 32. 13), loud complaints were made against the leaders. 3. **Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt**—How unreasonable and absurd the charge against Moses and Aaron! how ungrateful and impious against God! After all their experience of the Divine wisdom, goodness, and power, we pause and wonder over the sacred narrative of their hardness and unbelief. But the expression of feeling is contagious in so vast a multitude, and there is a feeling of solitude and despondency in the desert which numbers cannot dispel; and besides, we must remember that they were men engrossed with the *present*—that the Comforter was not then given—and that they were destitute of all visible means of sustenance, and cut off from every visible comfort, with only the promises of an *unseen* God to look to as the ground of their hope. And though we may lament they should tempt God in the wilderness, and freely admit their sin in so doing, we can be at no loss for a reason why those who had all their lives been accustomed to walk by *sight* should, in circumstances of unparalleled difficulty and perplexity, find it hard to walk by *faith*. Do not even *we* find it difficult to walk by faith through the wilderness of this world, though in the light of a clearer revelation, and under a nobler leader than Moses? [FISK.] (See 1 Corinthians, 10. 11, 12.) 4. **Then said the Lord unto Moses**—Though the outbreak was immediately against the human leaders, it was indirectly against God: yet mark His patience, and how graciously He promised to redress the grievance. **I will rain bread from heaven**—Israel, a type of the Church which is from above, and being under the conduct, government, and laws of heaven, received their food from heaven also (Psalm 78. 24). **that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no**—the grand object of their being led into the wilderness was that they might

receive a religious training directly under the eye of God ; and the first lesson taught them was a constant dependence on God for their daily nourishment. 13. **at even the quails came up, and covered the camp**—This bird is of the gallinaceous kind, resembling the red partridge, but not larger than the turtle-dove. They are found in certain seasons in the places through which the Israelites passed, being migratory birds, and they were probably brought to the camp by “a wind from the Lord” as on another occasion (Numbers, 11. 31). 13-31. **and in the morning . . . a small round thing . . . manna**—There is a gum of the same name distilled in this desert region from the tamarisk which is much prized by the natives, and preserved carefully by those who gather it. It is collected early in the morning, melts under the heat of the sun, and is congealed by the cold of night. In taste it is as sweet as honey, and has been supposed by distinguished travelers, from its whitish colour, time and place of its appearance, to be the manna on which the Israelites were fed ; so that, according to the views of some, it was a production indigenous to the desert ; according to others, there was a miracle, which consisted, however, only in the preternatural arrangements regarding its supply. But more recent and accurate examination has proved this gum of the tarfa-tite to be wanting in all the principal characteristics of the Scripture manna. It exudes only in small quantities, and not every year ; it does not admit of being baked (Numbers, 11. 8) or boiled (*v.* 23). Though it may be exhaled by the heat and afterward fall with the dew, it is a medicine, not food—it is well known to the natives of the desert, while the Israelites were strangers to theirs ; and in taste as well as in the appearance of double quantity on Friday, none on Sabbath, and in not breeding worms, it is essentially different from the manna furnished to the Israelites. 32-36. **Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations**—The mere fact of such a multitude being fed for forty years in the wilderness, where no food of any kind is to be obtained, will show the utter impossibility of their subsisting on a natural production of the kind and quantity as this tarfa-gum ; and as if for the purpose of removing all such groundless speculations, Aaron was commanded to put a sample of it in a pot—a golden pot (Hebrews, 9. 4)—to be laid before the Testimony—to be kept for future generations, that they might see the bread on which the Lord fed their fathers in the wilderness. But we have the bread of which that was merely a typical (1 Corinthians, 10. 3 ; John, 6. 32).

## CHAPTER XVII.

1-7. THE PEOPLE MURMUR FOR WATER. 1. **the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin**—In the succinct annals of this book, those places only are selected for particular notice by the inspired historian, which were scenes memorable for their happy or painful interest in the history of the Israelites. A more detailed itinerary is given in the later books of Moses, and we find that here, two stations are omitted. (Numbers, 33). **according to**

**the commandment of the Lord, &c.**—not given in oracular response, nor a vision of the night, but indicated by the movement of the cloudy pillar. The same phraseology occurs elsewhere (Numbers, 9. 18, 19). **pitched in Rephidim**—now believed, on good grounds, to be Wady Feiran, which is exactly a day's march from Mount Sinai, and at the entrance of the Horeb district. It is a long circuitous defile about forty feet in breadth, with perpendicular granite rocks on both sides. The wilderness of Sin through which they approached to this valley is very barren, has an extremely dry and thirsty aspect, little or no water, scarcely even a dwarfish shrub to be seen, and the only shelter to the panting pilgrims is under the shadow of the great overhanging cliffs. 2, 3. **the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink**—The want of water was a privation, the severity of which we cannot estimate, and it was a great trial to the Israelites, but their conduct on this new occasion was outrageous: it amounted even to "a tempting of the Lord." It was an opposition to His minister, a distrust of His care, an indifference to His kindness, an unbelief in His providence, a trying of His patience and fatherly forbearance. 4. **Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people?**—His language, instead of betraying any signs of resentment or vindictive imprecation on a people who had given him a cruel and unmerciful treatment, was the expression of an anxious wish to know what was the best to be done in the circumstances (Cf. Matthew, 5. 44; Romans, 12. 21). 5. **the Lord said unto Moses, &c.**—not to smite the rebels, but the rock; not to bring a stream of blood from the breast of the offenders, but a stream of water from the granite cliffs. The clouds rested on a particular rock, just as the star rested on the house where the infant Saviour was lodged. And from the rod-smitten rock there forthwith gushed a current of pure and refreshing water. It was perhaps the greatest miracle performed by Moses, and in many respects bore a resemblance to the greatest of Christ's: being done without ostentation, and in the presence of a few chosen witnesses (1 Corinthians, 10. 4). 7. **called the name of the place**—Massah (temptation; Meribah—chiding, —strife:) the same word which is rendered "provocation" (Hebrews, 3. 8).

**8-16. ATTACK OF AMALEK.** 8. **Then came Amalek**—Some time probably elapsed before they were exposed to this new evil; and the presumption of there being such an interval affords the only ground on which we can satisfactorily account for the altered—the better and former spirit that animated the people in this sudden contest. The miracles of the manna and the water from the rock had produced a deep impression and permanent conviction that God was indeed among them; and with feelings elevated by the conscious experience of the Divine presence and aid, they remained calm, resolute, and courageous, under the attack of their unexpected foe. **fought with Israel**—The language implies that no occasion had been furnished for this attack; but, as descendants of Esau, the Amalekites entertained a deep-seated grudge against them, especially as the rapid prosperity and marvellous experience of Israel showed that the blessing contained in the birthright was

taking effect. It seems to have been a mean, dastardly, insidious surprise on the rear (Numbers, 24. 20; Deuteronomy, 25. 17), and an impious defiance of God. 9. **Moses said unto Joshua** — or Jesus (Acts, 7. 45; Hebrews, 4. 8), and this is the earliest notice of a young warrior destined to act a prominent part in the history of Israel. He went with a number of picked men. There is not here a wide, open plain on which the battle took place, as according to the rules of modern warfare. The Amalekites were a nomadic tribe, making an irregular attack on a multitude probably not better trained than themselves, and for such a conflict the low hills and open country around this Wady would afford ample space. [ROBINSON.] 10-12. **Moses . . . went up . . . the hill . . . held up his hand** — with the wonder-working rod; he acted as the standard-bearer of Israel, and also their intercessor, praying for success and victory to crown their arms, — the earnest of his friend being conspicuously evinced amid the feebleness of nature. 13. **Joshua discomfited Amalek** — Victory at length decided in favour of Israel, and the glory of the victory, by an act of national piety, ascribed to God (Cf. 1 John, 5. 4). 14-16. **Write this for a memorial** — If the bloody character of this statute seems to be at variance with the mild and merciful character of God, the reasons are to be sought for in the deep and implacable vengeance they meditated against Israel (Psalm 83. 4).

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1-27. VISIT OF JETHRO. 1-5. **Jethro . . . came . . . unto Moses, &c.** — It is thought by many eminent commentators that this episode is inserted out of its chronological order, for it is described as occurring when the Israelites were "encamped at the mount of God." And yet they did not reach it till the third month after their departure from Egypt (ch. 19. 1, 2; Cf. Deuteronomy, 1. 6, 9-15). 6. **thy wife, and her two sons** — See on ch. 4. 20. 7. **Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, &c.** — Their salutations would be marked by all the warm and social greetings of Oriental friends (see ch. 4. 27) — the one going out to "meet" the other, the "obeisance," the "kiss" on each side of the head, the silent entrance into the tent for consultation, and their conversation ran in the strain that might have been expected of two pious men, rehearsing and listening to a narrative of the wonderful works and providence of God. 12. **Jethro . . . took a burnt offering** — This friendly interview was terminated by a solemn religious service — the *burnt offerings* were consumed on the altar, and the *sacrifices* were *peace offerings*, used in a feast of joy and gratitude at which Jethro, as priest of the true God, seems to have presided, and to which the chiefs of Israel were invited. This incident is in beautiful keeping with the character of the parties, and is well worthy of the imitation of Christian friends when they meet in the present day. 13-26. **on the morrow . . . Moses sat to judge the people, &c.** — We are here presented with a specimen of his daily morning occupations; and among the multifarious duties his Divine legation imposed, it

must be considered only a small portion of his official employments. He appears in this attitude as a type of Christ in his legislative and judicial characters. **the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening, &c.**—Governors in the East seat themselves at the most public gate of their palace or the city and there, amid a crowd of applicants, hear causes, receive petitions, redress grievances, and adjust the claims of contending parties. 17. **Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing . . . is not good**—not good either for Moses himself, for the maintenance of justice, or for the satisfaction and interests of the people. Jethro gave a prudent counsel as to the division of labour, and universal experience in the Church and State has attested the soundness and advantages of the principle. 23. **If thou shalt do this thing, &c.** Jethro's counsel was given merely in the form of a suggestion— it was not to be adopted without the express sanction and approval of a better and higher Counselor; and although we are not informed of it, there can be no doubt that Moses, before appointing subordinate magistrates, would ask the mind of God, as it is the duty and privilege of every Christian in like manner to supplicate the Divine direction in all his ways.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**1-25. ARRIVAL AT SINAI. I. In the third month**— according to Jewish usage the *first* day of that month—“same day,”—it is added, to mark the time more explicitly, *i. e.*, forty-five days after leaving Egypt— one day spent on the mount (*v.* 3), one returning people's answers (*v.* 7, 8), three days of preparation, making the whole time fifty days from the first passover to the promulgation of the law. Hence the feast of Pentecost, *i. e.*, the fiftieth day, was the inauguration of the Old Testament church, and the Divine wisdom is apparent in the selection of the same season for the institution of the New Testament church (John 1. 17; Acts, 2. 1). 2. **were come to the desert of Sinai**—The desert has its provinces, or divisions, distinguished by a variety of names; and the “desert of Sinai” is that wild and desolate region which occupies the very centre of the peninsula, comprising the lofty range to which the mount of God belongs. It is a wilderness of shaggy rocks of porphyry and red granite, and of valleys for the most part bare of verdure. **and there Israel camped before the mount**—Sinai, so called from Seneh, or acacia bush. It is now called Jebel Musa. Their way into the interior of the gigantic cluster was by Wady Feiran, which would lead to the bulk of the host with their flocks and herds into the high valleys of Jebel Musa, with their abundant springs, especially into the great thoroughfare of the desert—the longest, widest and most continuous of all the valleys, the Wady-es-Sheykh, while many would be scattered among the adjacent valleys; so that thus secluded from the world in a wild and sublime amphitheatre of rocks, they “camped before the mount.” “In this valley—a long, flat valley—about a quarter of a mile in breadth, winding northward, Israel would find ample room for their en-

campment. Of all the wadys in that region, it seems the most suitable for a prolonged sojourn. The 'goodly tents' of Israel could spread themselves without limit." [BONAR.] 3-6. **Moses went up unto God** — the Shechinah — within the cloud (ch. 33. 20; John, 1. 18). **Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, &c.** — The object for which Moses went up was to receive and convey to the people the message contained in these verses, and the purport of which was a general announcement of the terms on which God was to take the Israelites into a close and peculiar relation to Himself. In thus negotiating between God and His people, the highest post of duty which any mortal man was ever called to occupy, Moses was still but a servant. The only Mediator is Jesus Christ. **ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests** — as the priestly order was set apart from the common mass, so the Israelites, compared with other people, were to sustain the same near relation to God; a community of spiritual sovereigns. **an holy nation** — set apart to preserve the knowledge and worship of God. 7, 8. **Moses came, and called for the elders of the people** — The message was conveyed to the mighty multitude through their elders, who, doubtless, instructed them in the conditions required. Their unanimous acceptance was conveyed through the same channel to Moses, and by him reported to the Lord. Ah! how much self-confidence did their language betray! How little did they know what spirit they were of! 9-15. **the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come . . . in a thick cloud, &c.** — The deepest impressions are made on the mind through the medium of the senses; and so He who knew what was in man signalized His descent at the inauguration of the ancient church, by all the sensible tokens of august Majesty that were fitted to produce the conviction that He is the great and terrible God. The whole multitude must have anticipated the event with feelings of intense solemnity and awe. The extraordinary preparations enjoined, the ablutions and rigid abstinence they were required to observe, the barriers erected all round the base of the mount, and the stern penalties annexed to the breach of any of the conditions, all tended to create an earnest and solemn expectation which increased as the appointed day drew near. 16. **on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, &c.** — The descent of God was signalized by every object imagination can conceive connected with the ideas of grandeur and of awe. But all was in keeping with the character of the law about to be proclaimed. As the mountain burned with fire, God was exhibited a consuming fire to the transgressors of His law. The thunder and lightning, more awful amid the deep stillness of the region, and reverberating with terrific peals among the mountains, would rouse the universal attention: a thick cloud was an apt emblem of the dark and shadowy dispensation (Cf. Matthew, 17. 5). **the voice of a trumpet** — this gave the scene the character of a miraculous transaction, in which other elements than those of nature were at work, and some other than material trumpet was blown by other means than human breath. 17. **Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God** — Wady-er-Rahéh, where they stood, has a spacious

sandy plain, immediately in front of Es-Suksafeh, considered by ROBINSON to be the mount from which the law was given. "We measured it, and estimate the whole plains at two geographical miles long, and ranging in breadth from one-third to two-thirds of a mile, or as equivalent to a surface of one square mile. This space is nearly doubled by the recess on the west, and by the broad and level area of Wady-es-Sheikh on the east, which issues at right angles to the plain, and is equally in view of the front and summit of the mount. The examination convinced us that here was space enough to satisfy all the requisitions of the Scripture narrative, so far as it relates to the assembling of the congregation to receive the law. Here, too, one can see the fitness of the injunction to set bounds around the mount, that neither man nor beast might approach too near, for it rises like a perpendicular wall." But Jebel Musa, the old traditional Sinai, and the highest peak has also a spacious valley, Wady-Sheba'iyeh, capable of holding the people. It is not certain on which of these two they stood. 21. **the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people**—No sooner had Moses proceeded a little up the mount, than he was suddenly ordered to return, in order to keep the people from breaking through to gaze—a course adopted to heighten the impressive solemnity of the scene. The strict injunctions renewed to all, whatever their condition, at a time and in circumstances when the whole multitude of Israel were standing at the base of the mount, was calculated in the highest degree to solemnize and awe every heart.

## CHAPTER XX.

**1-26. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. 1. God spake all these words**—The Divine Being himself was the speaker (Deuteronomy, 5. 12, 32,33), in tones so loud as to be heard—so distinct as to be intelligible by the whole multitude standing in the valleys below, amid the most appalling phenomena of agitated nature. Had He been simply addressing rational and intelligent creatures, He would have spoken with the still small voice of persuasion and love. But He was speaking to those who were at the same time fallen and sinful creatures, and a corresponding change was required in the manner of God's procedure, in order to give a suitable impression of the character and sanctions of the law revealed from heaven (Romans, II. 5-9). **2. I am the Lord thy God**—This is a preface to the ten commandments—the latter clause being specially applicable to the case of the Israelites, while the former brings it home to all mankind; showing that the reasonableness of the law is founded in their eternal relation as creatures to their Creator, and their mutual relations to each other. **3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me**—in my presence, beside or except me. **4, 5. Thou shalt not make . . . any graven image . . . thou shalt not bow down thyself to them**—*i. e.*, "make in order to bow." Under the auspices of Moses himself, figures of cherubim, brazen serpents, oxen and many other things in the earth beneath, were made and never condemned. The mere making was no sin—it



was the making with the intent to give idolatrous worship. 8. **Remember the sabbath day**—implying it was already known, and recognized as a season of sacred rest. The first four commandments comprise our duties to God—the other six our duties to our fellow-men; and as interpreted by Christ, they reach to the government of the heart as well as the lip (Matthew, 5. 17). “If a man do them he shall live in them!” But, ah! what an *if* for frail and fallen man. Whoever rests his hope upon the law stands debtor to do it all; and in this view every one would be without hope, were not “the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (John, 1. 17). 18-21. **all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings**—They were eye and ear witnesses of the awful emblems of the Deity’s descent. But they perceived not the Deity himself. 19. **let not God speak with us, lest we die, &c.**—The phenomena of thunder and lightning had been one of the plagues so fatal to Egypt, and as they heard God speaking to them now, they were apprehensive of instant death also. Even Moses himself, the mediator of the old covenant, did “exceedingly quake and fear” (Hebrews, 12. 21). But doubtless God spake what gave *him* relief—restored him to a frame of mind fit for the ministrations committed to him; and hence immediately after he was enabled to relieve and comfort them with the relief and comfort which he himself had received from God (2 Corinthians, 1. 4). 22, 23. **the Lord said unto Moses**—It appears from Deuteronomy, 4. 14-16, that this injunction was a conclusion drawn from the scene on Sinai—that as no similitude of God was displayed then, they should not attempt to make any visible figure or form of him. 24. **An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me**—a regulation applicable to special or temporary occasions. 25. **thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, &c.**—*i. e.*, carved with figures and ornaments that might lead to superstitions. 26. **by steps**—a precaution taken for the sake of decency, in consequence of the loose, wide, flowing garments of the priests.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-6. LAWS FOR MEN SERVANTS.** 1. **judgments**—rules for regulating the procedure of judges and magistrates in the decision of causes and the trial of criminals. The government of the Israelites being a Theocracy, those public authorities were the servants of the Divine Sovereign, and subject to His direction. Most of these laws here noticed were primitive usages, founded on principles of natural equity, and incorporated with modifications and improvements, in the Mosaic code. 2-6. **If thou buy an Hebrew servant**—Every Israelite was freeborn; but slavery was permitted under certain restrictions. An Hebrew might be made a slave through poverty, debt or crime; but at the end of six years he was entitled to freedom, and his wife, if she had voluntarily shared his state of bondage, also obtained release. Should he, however, have married a female slave, she and the children, after the husband’s liberation, remained the master’s property; and if,

through attachment to his family, the Hebrew chose to forfeit his privilege and abide as he was, a formal process was gone through in a public court, and a brand of servitude stamped on his ear (Psalm 40. 6) for life, or at least till the jubilee (Deuteronomy, 15. 17).

**7-36. LAWS FOR MAID SERVANTS.** 7. **if a man sell his daughter** — Hebrew girls might be redeemed for a reasonable sum. But in the event of her parents or friends being unable to pay the redemption money, her owner was not at liberty to sell her elsewhere. Should she have been betrothed to him or his son, and either change their minds, a maintenance must be provided for her suitable to her condition as his intended wife, or her freedom instantly granted. 23-25. **eye for eye** — The law which authorized retaliation — a principle acted upon by all primitive people — was a civil one. It was given to regulate the procedure of the public magistrate in determining the amount of compensation in every case of injury, but did not encourage feelings of private revenge. The later Jews, however, mistook it for a *moral* precept, and were corrected by our Lord (Matthew, 5. 38-42). 28-36. **If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die** — For the purpose of sanctifying human blood, and representing all injuries affecting life in a serious light, an animal that occasioned death was to be killed or suffer punishment proportioned to the degree of damage it had caused. Punishments are still inflicted on this principle in Persia and other countries of the East; and among a rude people greater effect is produced in inspiring caution, and making them keep noxious animals under restraint, than a penalty imposed on the owners. 3. **If there be laid on him a sum of money, &c.** — Blood fines are common among the Arabs as they were once general throughout the East. This is the only case where a money compensation, instead of capital punishment, was expressly allowed in the Mosaic law.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**1-31. LAW CONCERNING THEFT.** 1. **If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep** — The law respects the theft of cattle which constituted the chief part of their property. The penalty for the theft of sheep which was slain or sold, was fourfold; for an ox, fivefold — because of its greater utility in labour; but, should the stolen animal have been recovered alive, a *double* compensation was all that was required, because it was presumable he (the thief) was not a practiced adept in dishonesty. A robber breaking into a house at *midnight* might, in self-defense, be slain with impunity; but if he was slain after *sunrise*, it would be considered murder, for it was not thought likely an assault would then be made upon the lives of the inmates. In every case where a thief could not make restitution, he was sold as a slave for the usual term. 6. **If fire break out, and catch in thorns** — This refers to the common practice in the East of setting fire to the dry grass before the fall of the autumnal rains, which prevents the ravages of vermin, and is con-

sidered a good preparation of the ground for the next crop. The very parched state of the herbage and the long droughts of summer, make the kindling of a fire an operation often dangerous, and always requiring caution from its liability to spread rapidly. **stacks**—or as it is rendered “shocks,” (Judges, 15. 5; Job, 5. 26), means simply a bundle of loose sheaves. 26, 27. **If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, &c.**—From the nature of the case, this is the description of a poor man. No Orientals undress, but merely throwing off their turbans and some of their heavy outer garments, they sleep in the clothes which they wear during the day. The bed of the poor is usually nothing else than a mat; and, in winter, they cover themselves with a cloak—a practice which forms the ground or reason of the humane and merciful law respecting the pawned coat. 28. **gods**—a word which is several times in this chapter rendered “judges” or magistrates. **the ruler of thy people**—and the chief magistrate who was also the high priest, at least in the time of Paul (Acts, 23. 1-5).

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**1-33. LAWS CONCERNING SLANDER, &c.** 1. **put not thine hand**—join not hands. 2. **decline**—depart, deviate from the straight path of rectitude. 3. **countenance**—adorn, embellish—thou shalt not varnish the cause even of a poor man to give it a better colouring than it merits. 10, 11. **six years thou shalt sow thy land**—intermitting the cultivation of the land every seventh year. But it appears that even then there was a spontaneous produce which the poor were permitted freely to gather for their use, and the beasts driven out fed on the remainder, the owners of fields not being allowed to reap or collect the fruits of the vineyard or oliveyard during the course of the sabbatical year. This was a regulation subservient to many excellent purposes; for, besides inculcating the general lesson of dependence on Providence, and of confidence in His faithfulness to His promise respecting the triple increase on the sixth year (Leviticus, 25. 20, 21), it gave the Israelites a practical proof that they held their properties of the Lord as His tenants, and must conform to His rules on pain of forfeiting the lease of them. 12. **Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest**—This law is repeated, lest any might suppose there was a relaxation of its observance during the Sabbatical year. 13. **make no mention of the name of other gods, &c.**—*i. e.*, in common conversation, for a familiar use of them would tend to lessen horror of idolatry. 14-18. **Three times . . . keep a feast . . . in a year**—This was the institution of the great religious festivals—“the feast of unleavened bread” or the Pass-over—“the feast of harvest” or Pentecost—“the feast of ingathering” or the feast of Tabernacles, which was a memorial of the dwelling in booths in the wilderness, and which was observed “in the end of the year,” or the seventh month (ch. 12. 2). All the males were enjoined to repair to the tabernacle, and afterward the temple; and the women frequently went. The institution of this

national custom was of the greatest importance in many ways—by keeping up a national sense of religion, and a public uniformity in worship; by creating a bond of unity, and also promoting internal commerce among the people. Though the absence of all the males at these three festivals left the country defenseless, a special promise was given of Divine protection, and no incursion of enemies was ever permitted to happen on those occasions. 19. **Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk**—A prohibition against imitating the superstitious rights of the idolators in Egypt, who, at the end of their harvest, seethed a kid in its mother's milk and sprinkled the broth as a magical charm on their gardens and fields, to render them more productive the following season. 20-25. **Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way**—The communication of these laws made to Moses, and by him rehearsed to the people, was concluded by the addition of many animating promises, intermingled with several solemn warnings, that lapses into sin and idolatry would not be tolerated or passed with impunity. **my name is in him**—This angel is frequently called Jehovah and Elohim, *i. e.*, God. 28. **I will send hornets before thee, &c.**—(Joshua, 24. 12.) Some instrument of Divine judgment, but variously interpreted as hornets in a literal sense. [BOCHART.] As a pestilential disease. [ROSENMULLER.] As a terror of the Lord—an extraordinary dejection. [JUNIUS.] 29, 30. **I will not drive . . . out . . . in one year; lest the land become desolate**—Many reasons recommended a gradual extirpation of the former inhabitants of Canaan. But only one is here specified—the danger lest in the unoccupied grounds wild beasts should inconveniently multiply; a clear proof that the promised land was more than sufficient to contain the actual population of the Israelites.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1-18. DELIVERY OF THE LAW AND COVENANT. 3. **Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord**—The rehearsal of the foregoing laws and the ten commandments, together with the promises of special blessings in the event of their obedience, having drawn forth from the people a unanimous declaration of their consent, it was forthwith recorded as the conditions of the *national* covenant. The next day preparations were made for having it solemnly ratified, by building an altar and twelve pillars; the altar representing God, and the pillars the tribes of Israel—the two parties in this solemn compact—while Moses acted as typical mediator. 5. **young men**—priests (ch. 19. 22), probably the eldest sons of particular families, who acted under the direction of Moses. **oxen**—other animals, though not mentioned, were offered in sacrifice (Hebrews, 9. 18-20). 6. **Moses took half of the blood . . . sprinkled**—Preliminary to this was the public reading of the law, and the renewed acceptance of the terms by the people; then the sprinkling of the blood was the sign of solemn ratification—half on each party in the transaction. 8. **Moses took the**

blood, and sprinkled it on the people — probably on the twelve pillars, as representing the people (also the book, Hebrews, 9. 19), and the act was accompanied by a public proclamation of its import. It was setting their seal to the covenant (Cf. 1 Corinthians, 11. 25). It must have been a deeply impressive, as well as instructive scene, for it taught the Israelites that the covenant was made with them only through the sprinkling of blood — that the Divine acceptance of themselves and services was only by virtue of an atoning sacrifice, and that even the blessings of the *national* covenant were promised and secured to them only through grace. The ceremonial, however, had a further and higher signification, as is shown by the apostle (see as above). 9. **Then went up Moses and Aaron** — In obedience to a command given (*v.* 1, 2; also ch. 19. 24), previous to the religious engagement of the people, now described. **Nadab and Abihu** — the two eldest sons of Aaron. **seventy of the elders** — a select number; what was the principle of selection is not said; but they were the chief representatives, the most conspicuous for official rank and station, as well as for their probity and weight of character in their respective tribes. 10. **they saw the God of Israel** — That there was no visible form or representation of the Divine nature we have express intimation (Deuteronomy, 4. 15). But a symbol or emblem of His glory was distinctly, and at a distance, displayed before those chosen witnesses. Many think, however, that in this private scene, was discovered, amid the luminous blaze, the faint, adumbrated form of the humanity of Christ (Ezekiel, 1. 26; Cf. Galatians, 3. 24). **sapphire** — one of the most valuable and lustrous of the present gems — of a sky-blue or light azure colour, and frequently chosen to describe the throne of God (see Ezekiel, 1. 26; 10. 1). 11. **upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand** — The “nobles,” *i. e.*, the elders, after the sprinkling of the blood, were not inspired with terror in presence of the calm, benign, radiant symbol of the Divine majesty; so different from the terrific exhibition at the givings of the law. The report of so many competent witnesses would tend to confirm the people’s faith in the Divine mission of Moses. **eat and drink** — feasted on the peace offerings; on the remnants of the late sacrifices and libations. This feast had a prophetic bearing, intimating God’s dwelling with men. 12. **I will give thee tables of stone** — The ten commandments, which had already been spoken, were to be given in a permanent form. Inscribed on stone, for greater durability, by the hand of God himself, they were thus authenticated and honoured above the judicial or ceremonial parts of the law. 13. **Moses went up into the mount of God** — He was called to receive the Divine transcript. Joshua was taken a little higher, and it would be a great comfort to the leader to have his company during the six days he was in patient waiting for the call on the seventh or Sabbath-day. 14. **he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us** — There is a circular valley or hollow a good way up on the brow of Jebel Musa, which was their halting place, while he alone was privileged to ascend the highest peak. The people stood below, as in the “outer court,” the elders in the “holy place” Moses, as a

type of Christ, in "the holy of holies." 18. **Moses went into the midst of the cloud**—the visible token of God's presence. Divine grace animated and supported him to enter with holy boldness. **Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights**—The six days spent in waiting are not included. During that protracted period he was miraculously supported (Deuteronomy, 9. 9), on a peak scarcely thirty paces in compass.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1-40. CONCERNING AN OFFERING. 1. **The Lords spake unto Moses, &c.**—The business that chiefly occupied Moses on the mount, whatever other disclosures were made to him there, was in receiving directions about the tabernacle, and they are here recorded as given to him. 2. **bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly, &c.**—Having declared allegiance to God as their sovereign, they were expected to contribute to His state, as other subjects to their kings; and the "offering" required of them was not to be imposed as a tax, but to come from their own loyal and liberal feelings. 3. **this is the offering which ye shall take of them**—The articles of which the offering should consist. **brass**—rather copper, brass being a composite metal. 4. **goats' hair**—or leather of goat's skin. 5. **badgers' skin**—The badger was an unclean animal, and is not a native of the East—rather some kind of fish, of the leather of which sandals are made in the East. **shittim wood**—or *Shittah* (Isaiah, 41. 19), the acacia, a shrub which grows plentifully in the deserts of Arabia, yielding a light, strong, and beautiful wood, in long planks. 7. **ephod**—a square cloak, hanging down from the shoulders, and worn by priests. 8. **a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them**—In one sense the tabernacle was to be a palace, the royal residence of the king of Israel, in which he was to dwell among his people, receive their petitions and issue his responses. But it was also to be a place of worship, in which God was to record His name, and to enshrine the mystic symbol of his presence. 9. **According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle**—The proposed erection could be in the circumstances of the Israelites, not of a fixed and stable, but of a temporary and movable description, capable of being carried about with them in their various sojournings. It was made after "the pattern" shown to Moses, by which is now generally understood, not that it was an unheard of novelty, or an entire original structure, for it is ascertained to have borne resemblance in form and arrangements to the style of an Egyptian temple, but that it was so altered, modified and purified from all idolatrous associations as to be appropriated to right objects, and suggestive of ideas connected with the true God and His worship. 10. **an ark**—a coffer or chest, overlaid with gold, the dimensions of which, taking the cubit at eighteen inches, are computed to be three feet nine inches in length, two feet three inches in breadth. 11. **a crown**—a rim or cornice. 12. **rings**—staves for the poles, with which it was to be carried from place to



The Brazen Laver.





place. 15. **staves shall be in the rings of the ark** — *i. e.*, always remain in the rings, whether the ark be at rest or in motion. 16. **the testimony** — that is, the two tables of stone, containing the ten commandments, and called “the Testimony,” because by it God did testify His sovereign authority over Israel as His people, His selection of them as the guardians of His will and worship, and His displeasure in the event of their transgressing His laws; while, on their part, by receiving and depositing this law in its appointed place, they testified their acknowledgment of God’s right to rule over them, and their submission to the authority of his law. The superb and elaborate style of the ark that contained “the Testimony” was emblematic of the great treasure it held; in other words, the incomparable value and excellence of the Word of God, while its being placed in this chest further showed the great care which God has ever taken for preserving it. 17. **thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold** — to serve as a lid, covering it exactly. It was “the propitiatory cover,” as the term may be rendered, denoting that Christ, our great propitiation, has fully answered all the demands of the law, covers our transgressions, and comes between us and the curse of a violated law. 18. **two cherubims** — The real meaning of these figures as well as the shape or form of them is not known with certainty — probably similar to what was afterward introduced into the temple and described (Ezekiel, 10). They stretched out their wings, and their faces were turned toward the mercy seat, probably in a bowing attitude. The prevailing opinion now is, that those splendid figures were symbolical not of angelic but of earthly and human beings — the members of the church of God interested in the dispensation of grace, the redeemed in every age, and that these hieroglyphic forms symbolized the qualities of the true people of God — courage, patience, intelligence and activity. 22. **there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercyseat** — The Shechinah or symbol of the Divine presence rested on the mercyseat, and was indicated by a cloud from the midst of which responses were audibly given when God was consulted on behalf of His people. Hence, God is described as “dwelling” or “sitting” between the cherubims. 23. **table of shittim wood** — of the same material and decoration as the ark, and like it, too, furnished with rings for the poles on which it was carried. The staves, however, were taken out of it when stationary, in order not to encumber the priests while engaged in their services at the table. It was half a cubit less than the ark, but of the same height. 24. **crowns** — the moulding or ornamental rim, which is thought to have been raised above the level of the table, to prevent any thing from falling off. 29. **dishes** — broad platters. **spoons** — cups or concave vessels, used for holding incense. **covers** — both for bread and incense. **bowls** — cups; for though no mention is made of wine, libations were undoubtedly made to God, according to JOSEPHUS and the rabbins, once a week, when the bread was changed. **to cover withal** — rather to pour out withal. 30. **shewbread** — *lit.*, *presence bread*, so called because it was constantly exhibited before the Lord, or because the bread of His presence, like the angel of His

presence, pointed symbolically to Christ. It consisted of twelve unleavened loaves, said traditionally to have been laid in piles of six each. This bread was designed to be a symbol of the full and never failing provision which is made in the church for the spiritual sustenance and refreshment of God's people. 31. **andlestick** — *lit.*, a lamp-bearer. It was so constructed as to be capable of being taken to pieces for facility in removal. The shaft or stock rested on a pedestal. It had seven branches, shaped like reeds or canes — three on each side; with one in the centre — and worked out into knobs, flowers and bowls, placed alternately. The figure represented on the arch of Titus gives the best idea of this candlestick. 33. **knops** — old spelling for knobs — bosses. 37 **they shall light the lamps . . . that they may give light** — the light was derived from pure olive oil, and probably kept continually burning (Cf. ch. 30. 7; Leviticus, 24. 2). 38. **tongs** — snuffers. 39. **a talent of pure gold** — in weight equivalent to 125 lbs. troy. 40. **look that thou make them after their pattern** — This caution, which is repeated with no small frequency in other parts of the narrative, is an evidence of the deep interest taken by the Divine King in the erection of His palace or sanctuary; and it is impossible to account for the circumstance of God's condescending to such minute details, except on the assumption that this tabernacle was to be of a typical character, and eminently subservient to the religious instruction and benefit of mankind, by shadowing forth, in its leading features, the grand truths of the Christian church.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

**1-37. TEN CURTAINS.** 1. **cunning work** — *i. e.*, of elegant texture, richly embroidered. The word "cunning," in old English, is synonymous with skillful. 2. **length** — Each curtain was to be fifteen yards in length, and a little exceeding two in breadth. 3. **The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another, &c.** — so as to form two grand divisions, each eleven yards wide. 6. **taches** — clasps; supposed in shape, as well as in use, to be the same as hooks and eyes. 7-13. **curtains of goats' hair** — These coarse curtains were to be one more in number than the others, and to extend a yard lower on each side, the use of them being to protect and conceal the richer curtains. 14. **a covering . . . of rams' skins dyed red** — *i. e.*, of Turkey red leather. 15-30. **thou shalt make boards . . . rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion . . . which was showed thee** — The tabernacle, from its name, as well as from its general appearance and arrangements, was a tent; but from the description given in these verses, the boards that formed its walls, the five (cross) bars that strengthen them, and the middle bar that "reached from end to end," and gave it solidity and compactness, it was evidently a more substantial fabric than the light and fragile tent, probably on account of the weight of its various coverings as well as for the protection of its precious furniture. 36. **an hanging for the door of the tent** — curtains of rich and elaborate embroidery made by the female in-

mates, are suspended over the doors or entrances of the tents occupied by Eastern chiefs and princes. In a similar style of elegance was the hanging finished which was to cover the door of this tabernacle—the chosen habitation of the God and King of Israel. It appears from verses 12, 22, 23, that the ark and mercy-seat were placed in the west end of the tabernacle, and consequently the door or entrance fronted the East, so that the Israelites in worshipping Jehovah, turned their faces toward the West, that they might be thus figuratively taught to turn from the worship of that luminary which was the great idol of the nations, and to adore the God who made it and them. [HEWLETT.]

## CHAPTER XXVII.

**1-21. ALTAR FOR BURNT OFFERING. 1. altar of shittim wood**—The dimensions of this altar which was placed at the entrance of the sanctuary were nearly three yards square, and a yard and a half in height. Under the wooden frame of this chest-like altar the inside was hollow, and each corner was to be terminated by “horns”—angular projections, perpendicular or oblique, in the form of horns. The animals to be sacrificed were bound to these (Psalm 118. 27), and part of the blood was applied to them. **3. shovels**—fire shovels for scraping together any of the scattered ashes. **basons**—for receiving the blood of the sacrifice to be sprinkled on the people. **flesh-hooks**—curved, three-pronged forks (1 Samuel, 2. 13, 14). **fire-pans**—A large sort of vessel, wherein the sacred fire which came down from heaven (Leviticus, 9. 24) was kept burning, while they cleaned the altar and the grate from the coals and ashes, and while the altar was carried from one place to another in the wilderness. [PATRICK, SPENCER, LE CLERC.] **4. a grate of net-work of brass**—sunk lattice work to support the fire. **5. put it under the compass of the altar beneath**—*i. e.*, the grating in which they were carried to a clean place (Leviticus, 4. 12). **4. four brazen rings**—by which the grating might be lifted and taken away as occasion required from the body of the altar. **6, 7. staves . . . rings**—those rings were placed at the side through which the poles were inserted on occasions of removal. **9. the court of the tabernacle**—The inclosure in which the edifice stood was a rectangular court, extending rather more than fifty yards in length, and half that space in breadth, and the enclosing parapet was about three yards or half the height of the tabernacle. That parapet consisted of a connected series of curtains, made of fine twined linen yarn, woven into a kind of net work, so that the people could see through; but that large curtain which overhung the entrance was of a different texture, being embroidered and dyed with variegated colours, and it was furnished with cords for pulling it up or drawing it aside when the priests had occasion to enter. The curtains of this enclosure were supported on sixty brazen pillars which stood on pedestals of the same metal, but their capitals and fillets were of silver, and the hooks on which they were suspended were of silver also. **19. pins**—

were designed to hold down the curtains at the bottom, lest the wind should waft them aside. 20, 21. **pure oil olive beaten** — *i. e.*, such as runs from the olives when bruised and without the application of fire. **for the light . . . Aaron and his sons** — were to take charge of lighting it in all time coming. **shall order it from evening to morning** — The tabernacle having no windows, the lamps required to be lighted during the day. JOSEPHUS says that in his time only three were lighted ; but his were degenerate times, and there is no Scripture authority for this limitation. But although the priests were obliged from necessity to light them by day, they might have let them go out at night had it not been for this express ordinance.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**1-43. APPOINTMENT TO THE PRIESTHOOD. I. take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him** — Moses had hitherto discharged the priestly functions (Psalm 99. 6), and he evinced the piety as well as humility of his character, in readily complying with the command to invest his brother with the sacred office, though it involved the perpetual exclusion of his own family. The appointment was a special act of God's sovereignty, so that there could be no ground for popular umbrage by the selection of Aaron's family, with whom the office was inalienably established and continued in unbroken succession till the introduction of the Christian era. 2-5. **holy garments** — No inherent holiness belonged either to the material or the workmanship. But they are called "holy" simply because they were not worn on ordinary occasions, but assumed in the discharge of the sacred functions (Ezekiel, 44. 19). **for glory and for beauty** — It was a grand and sumptuous attire. In material, elaborate embroidery, and colour, it had an imposing splendour. The tabernacle being adapted to the infantine age of the church, it was right and necessary that the priests' garments should be of such superb and dazzling appearance, that the people might be inspired with a due respect for the ministers as well as the rites of religion. But they had also a further meaning, for being all made of linen, they were symbolical of the truth, purity, and other qualities in Christ that rendered Him such a high priest as became us. 6-14. **ephod** — It was a very gorgeous robe made of byssus, curiously embroidered, and dyed with variegated colours, and further enriched with golden tissue, the threads of gold being either originally interwoven or afterward inserted by the embroiderer. It was short — reaching from the breast to a little below the loins — and though destitute of sleeves, retained its position by the support of straps thrown over each shoulder. These straps or braces, connecting the one with the back, the other with the front piece of which the tunic was composed, were united on the shoulder by two onyx stones, serving as buttons, and on which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved, and set in golden encasements. The symbolical design of this was, that the high priest, who bore the names along

with him in all his ministrations before the Lord, might be kept in remembrance of his duty to plead their cause, and supplicate the accomplishment of the Divine promises in their favour. The ephod was fastened by a girdle of the same costly materials, *i. e.*, dyed, embroidered, and wrought with threads of gold. It was about a hand-breadth wide, and wound twice round the upper part of the waist; it fastened in front, the ends hanging down at great length (Revelation, I. 13). 15-29. **thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work** — a very splendid and richly embroidered piece of brocade, a span square, and doubled, to enable it the better to bear the weight of the precious stones in it. There were twelve different stones, containing each the name of a tribe, and arranged in four rows, three in each. The Israelites had acquired a knowledge of the lapidary's art in Egypt, and the amount of their skill in cutting, polishing, and setting precious stones, may be judged of by the *diamond* forming one of the engraved ornaments on this breastplate. A ring was attached to each corner, through which the golden chains were passed to fasten this brilliant piece of jewelry at the top and bottom tightly on the breast of the ephod. 30. **thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and Thummim** — The words signify "lights" and "perfections;" and nothing more is meant than the precious stones of the breast-plate already described (Cf. ch. 39. 8-21; Leviticus, 8. 8). They received the name because the bearing of them qualified the high priest to consult the Divine oracle on all public or national emergencies, by going into the holy place — standing close before the veil and putting his hand upon the Urim and Thummim, conveyed a petition from the people and asked counsel of God, who, as the Sovereign of Israel, gave response from the midst of His glory. Little however, is known about them. But it may be remarked that Egyptian judges wore on the breast of their official robes a representation of Justice, and the high priest in Israel long officiated also as a judge; so that some think the Urim and Thummim had a reference to his judicial functions. 31. **the robe of the ephod all of blue** — it was the middle garment, under the ephod and above the coat. It had a hole through which the head was thrust, and was formed carefully of one piece, such as was the coat of Christ (John, 19. 23). The high priest's was of a sky-blue colour. The binding at the neck was strongly woven, and it terminated below in a fringe, made of blue, purple, and scarlet tassels, in the form of a pomegranate, interspersed with small bells of gold, which tinkled as the wearer was in motion. 34. **a golden bell and a pomegranate** — The bells were hung between the pomegranates, which are said to have amounted to seventy-two, and the use of them seems to have been to announce to the people when the high priest entered the most holy place, that they might accompany him with their prayers, and also to remind himself to be attired in his official dress, to minister without which was death. 36-38. **mitre** — crown-like cap for the head, not covering the entire head, but adhering closely to it, composed of fine linen. The Scripture has not described its form, but from JOSEPHUS we may gather that it was conical in

shape, as he distinguishes the mitres of the common priests by saying that they were *not* conical—that it was encircled with swathes of blue embroidered, and that it was covered by one piece of fine linen to hide the seams. **plate**—*lit.*, petal of a flower, which seems to have been the figure of this golden plate, which was tied with a ribbon of blue on the front of the mitre, so that every one facing him could read the inscription. 39. **coat of fine linen**—a garment fastened at the neck, and reaching far down the person, with the sleeves terminating at the elbow. **girdle of needle-work**—a piece of fine twined linen, richly embroidered, and variously dyed. It is said to have been very long, and being many times wound round the body, it was fastened in front, and the ends hung down, which, being an impediment to a priest in active duty, were usually thrown across the shoulders. This was the outer garment of the common priests. 40. **bonnets**—turbans. 42. **linen breeches**—drawers, which encompassed the loins and reached half way down the thighs. They are seen very frequently represented in Egyptian figures.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

**1-35. CONSECRATING THE PRIEST AND THE ALTAR. I. hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office**—The act of inaugurating the priests was accompanied by ceremonial solemnities well calculated not only to lead the people to entertain exalted views of the office, but to impress those functionaries themselves with a profound sense of its magnitude and importance. In short, they were taught to know that the service was for them as well as for the people; and every time they engaged in a new performance of their duties, they were reminded of their personal interest in the worship, by being obliged to offer for themselves, before they were qualified to offer as the representatives of the people. **this is the thing that thou shalt do**—Steps are taken at the beginning of a society, which would not be repeated, when the social machine was in full motion; and Moses, at the opening of the tabernacle, was employed to discharge functions, which in latter periods would have been regarded as sacrilege, laying an unhallowed hand on the ark, and punished with instant death. But he acted under the special direction of God. 4-10. **Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle**—As occupying the intermediate space between the court where the people stood, and the dwelling-place of Israel's king, and therefore the fittest spot for the priests being duly prepared for entrance, and the people witnessing the ceremony of inauguration. **wash them with water. And . . . take the garments**—The manner in which these parts of the ceremonial was performed is minutely described, and in discovering their symbolical import, which, indeed, is sufficiently plain and obvious, we have inspired authority to guide us. It signified the necessity and importance of moral purity of holiness (Isaiah, 52. 11; John, 13. 10; 2 Corinthians, 7. 1; 1 Peter, 3. 21). In like manner, the investi-

ture with the holy garments signified their being clothed with righteousness (Revelation, 19. 8), and equipped as men active and well prepared for the service of God ; the anointing the high priest with oil, denoted that he was to be filled with the influences of the Spirit, for the edification and delight of the church (Leviticus, 10. 7 ; Psalm 45. 7 ; Isaiah, 61. 1 ; 1 John, 2. 27), and as he was officially a type of Christ (Hebrews, 7. 26 ; John, 3. 34 ; also Matthew, 3. 16 ; 11. 29). **Thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle**—This part of the ceremonial consisted of three sacrifices—(1.) The sacrifice of a bullock, as a sin offering ; and in rendering it, the priest was directed to put his hand upon the head of the sacrifice, expressing by that act a consciousness of personal guilt, and a wish that it might be accepted as a vicarious satisfaction. (2.) The sacrifice of a ram as a burnt offering—(v. 15-18)—the ram was to be wholly burnt, in token of the priest's dedication of himself to God and His service. The sin offering was *first* to be presented, and *then* the burnt offering ; for until guilt be removed, no acceptable service can be performed. (3.) There was to be a peace offering, called the ram of consecration (v. 19-22). And there was a marked peculiarity in the manner in which this other ram was to be disposed of. The former was for the glory of God—this was for the comfort of the priest himself ; and as a sign of a mutual covenant being ratified, the blood of the sacrifice was divided—part sprinkled on the altar round about, and part upon the persons and garments of the priests. Nay, the blood was, by a singular act, directed to be put upon the extremities of the body, thereby signifying that the benefits of the atonement would be applied to the whole nature of man. Moreover, the flesh of this sacrifice was to be divided, as it were, between God and the priest—part of it to be put into his hand to be waived up and down, in token of its being offered to God, and then it was to be burnt upon the altar ; the other part was to be eaten by the priests at the door of the tabernacle—that feast being a symbol of communion or fellowship with God. These ceremonies, performed in the order described, showed the qualifications necessary for the priests. (See Hebrews, 7. 26, 27 ; 10. 14). **35. seven days shalt thou consecrate them**—The renewal of these ceremonies on the return of every day in the seven, with the intervention of a Sabbath, was a wise preparatory arrangement, in order to afford a sufficient interval for calm and devout reflection (Hebrews, 9. 1 ; 10. 1).

**36, 37. CONSECRATION OF THE ALTAR.** **36. thou shalt cleanse the altar**—The phrase, “when thou hast made an atonement for it,” should be, *upon* it ; and the purport of the direction is, that during all the time they were engaged as above from day to day, in offering the appointed sacrifices, the greatest care was to be taken to keep the altar properly cleansed—to remove the ashes, and sprinkle it with the prescribed unction, that at the conclusion of the whole ceremonial, the altar itself should be consecrated as much as the ministers who were to officiate at it (Matthew, 23. 19). It was thenceforth associated with the services of religion.

**38-46. INSTITUTION OF DAILY SERVICE.** **38. two lambs of the**

**first year day by day continually** — The sacred preliminaries being completed, Moses was instructed in the end or design to which these preparations were subservient, *viz.*, the worship of God ; and hence the institution of the morning and evening sacrifice. The institution was so imperative, that in no circumstances was this daily oblation to be dispensed with ; and the due observance of it would secure the oft-promised grace and blessing of their heavenly King.

## CHAPTER XXX.

**1-38. THE ALTAR OF INCENSE. 1. thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon, &c.** — its material was to be like that of the ark of the testimony, but its dimensions very small. **2. four-square** — the meaning of which is not that it was to be entirely of a cubical form, but that upon its upper and under surface, it showed four equal sides. It was twice as high as it was broad, being twenty-one inches broad and three feet six inches high. It had "horns ;" its top or flat surface was surmounted by an ornamental ledge or rim, called a crown, and it was furnished at the sides with rings for carriage. Its only accompanying piece of furniture was a golden censer or pan, in which the incense was set fire to upon the altar. Hence it was called the altar of incense, or the "golden altar," from the profuse degree in which it was gilded or overlaid with the precious metal. This splendour was adapted to the early age of the church, but in later times, when the worship was to be more spiritual, the altar of incense is prophetically described as not of gold but of wood, and double the size of that in the tabernacle, because the church should be vastly extended (Malachi, I. II). **6. thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony** — which separated the holy from the most holy place. The tabernacle was in the middle, between the table of showbread and the candlestick next the holy of holies, at equal distances from the north and south walls ; in other words, it occupied a spot on the outside of the great partition veil, but directly in front of the mercy-seat, which was within that sacred inclosure ; so that although the priest who ministered at this altar could not behold the mercy-seat, he was to look toward it, and present his incense in that direction. This was a special arrangement, and it was designed to teach the important lesson — that though we cannot with the eye of sense, see the throne of grace, we must "direct our prayer to it and look up" (Cf. 2 Corinthians, 3. 14 ; Hebrews, 10. 20 ; Revelation, 4. 1). **7. Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense** — *lit.*, incense of spices — strong aromatic substances were burnt upon this altar to counteract by their odoriferous fragrance the offensive fumes of the sacrifices : or the incense was employed in an offering of tributary homage which the Orientals used to make as a mark of honour to kings ; and as God was Theocratic Ruler of Israel, *His* palace was not to be wanting in a usage of such significance. Both these ends were served by this altar — that of fumigating the apartments of the sacred edifice, while the pure lambent flame, according to Oriental notions, was an honorary tribute to the majesty of Israel's



King. But there was a far higher meaning in it still: for as the tabernacle was not only a palace for Israel's King, but a place of worship for Israel's God, this altar was immediately connected with a religious purpose. In the style of the sacred writers, incense was a symbol or emblem of prayer (Psalm 141. 2; Revelation, 5. 8; 8. 3). From the uniform combination of the two services, it is evident that the incense was an emblem of the prayers of sincere worshippers ascending to heaven in the cloud of perfume; and, accordingly, the priest who officiated at this altar typified the intercessory office of Christ (Luke, 1. 10; Hebrews, 7. 25). 8. **Aaron shall burn incense** — seemingly limiting the privilege of officiating at the altar of incense to the high priest alone, and there is no doubt that he and his successors exclusively attended this altar on the great religious festivals. But "Aaron" is frequently used for the whole priestly order; and in later times, any of the priests might have officiated at this altar in rotation (Luke, 1. 9). **every morning . . . at even** — In every period of the national history, this daily worship was scrupulously observed. 9. **Ye shall offer no strange incense** — *i. e.*, of a different composition from that of which the ingredients are described so minutely 11-16. **When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, &c.** — Moses did so twice, and doubtless observed the law here prescribed. The tax was not levied from women, minors, old men (Numbers, 1. 42, 45), and the Levites (Numbers, 1. 47), they being not numbered. Assuming the shekel of the sanctuary to be about half an ounce troy, though nothing certain is known about it, the sum payable by each individual was two and fourpence. This was not a voluntary contribution, but a ransom for the soul, or lives of the people. It was required from all classes alike, and a refusal to pay implied a willful exclusion from the privileges of the sanctuary, as well as exposure to Divine judgments. It was probably the same impost that was exacted from our Lord (Matthew, 17. 24-27), and it was usually devoted to repairs and other purposes connected with the services of the sanctuary. 18-21. **Thou shalt . . . make a laver of brass** — Though not actually forming a component part of the furniture of the tabernacle, this vase was closely connected with it; and though from standing at the entrance it would be a familiar object, it possessed great interest and importance from the baptismal purposes to which it was applied. No data are given by which its form and size can be ascertained; but it was probably a miniature pattern of Solomon's — a circular basin. **his foot** — supposed not to be the pedestal on which it rested, but a trough or shallow receptacle below, into which the water, let out from a cock or spout, flowed; for the way in which all Eastern people wash their hands or feet, is by pouring upon them the water which falls into a basin. This laver was provided for the priests alone. But in the Christian dispensation, all believers are priests, and hence the apostle exhorts them how to draw near to God (Joshua, 13. 10; Hebrews, 10. 22). 22-33. **Take thou also . . . principal spices, &c.** — Oil is frequently mentioned in Scripture as an emblem of sanctification, and anointing with it a means of designating objects as well as persons to the service of God. Here it is prescribed by Divine authority, and

the various ingredients in their several proportions described which were to compose the oil used in consecrating the furniture of the tabernacle. **myrrh**—a fragrant and medicinal gum from a little known tree in Arabia. **sweet cinnamon**—produced from a species of laurel or sweet bay, found chiefly in Ceylon, growing to a height of twenty feet; this spice is extracted from the inner bark, but it is not certain whether that mentioned by Moses is the same as that with which we are familiar. **sweet calamus**—or sweet cane, a product of Arabia and India, of a tawny colour in appearance; it is like the common cane, and strongly odoriferous. **cassia**—from the same species of tree as the cinnamon—some think the outer bark of that tree. All these together would amount to 120 lbs. Troy weight. **hin**—a word of Egyptian origin, equal to ten pints. Being mixed with the olive oil—no doubt of the purest kind—this composition probably remained always in a liquid state, and the strictest prohibition issued against using it for any other purpose than anointing the tabernacle and its furniture. 34-38. **the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices**—These were: stacte, the finest myrrh; onycha, supposed to be an odoriferous shell; galbanum, a gum-resin from an umbelliferous plant. **frankincense**—a dry, resinous, aromatic gum, of a yellow colour, which comes from a tree in Arabia, and is obtained by incision of the bark. This incense was placed within the sanctuary, to be at hand when the priest required to burn on the altar. The art of compounding unguents and perfumes was well known in Egypt, where sweet scented spices were extensively used not only in common life, but in the ritual of the temples. Most of the ingredients here mentioned have been found on minute examination of mummies and other Egyptian relics; and the Israelities, therefore, would have the best opportunities of acquiring in that country the skill in pounding and mixing them which they were called to exercise in the service of the tabernacle. But the recipe for the incense as well as for the oil in the tabernacle, though it receives illustration from the customs of Egypt, was peculiar, and being prescribed by Divine authority, was to be applied to no common or inferior purpose.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

1-18. **BEZALEEL AND AHOLIAB.** 2. **See, I have called**—Though the instructions about the tabernacle were privately communicated to Moses, it was plainly impossible that he could superintend the work in person, amid the multiplicity of his other duties. A head director or builder was selected by God himself; and the nomination by such high authority removed all ground of jealousy or discontent on the part of any who might have thought their merits overlooked (Cf. Matthew, 18. 1). **by name Bezaleel**—Signifying “in the shadow or protection of God;” and, as called to discharge a duty of great magnitude—to execute a confidential trust in the ancient church of God, has his family and lineage recorded with marked distinction. He belonged to the tribe of Judea, which, doubtless for wise and weighty reasons, God all along delighted to

honour ; and he was the grandson of Hur, a pious patriot (ch. 17. 12), who was associated, by a special commission, with Aaron in the government of the people during the absence of Moses. Moreover, it may be noticed that a Jewish tradition affirms Hur to be the husband of Miriam ; and if this tradition may be relied on, it affords an additional reason for the appointment of Bezaleel emanating from the direct authority of God. 3-5. **I have filled him with the spirit of God** — It is probable that he was naturally endowed with a mechanical genius, and had acquired in Egypt great knowledge and skill in the useful, as well as liberal arts, so as to be a first-class artisan, competent to take charge of both the plain and ornamental work, which the building of the sacred edifice required. When God has any special work to be accomplished, He always raises up instruments capable of doing it ; and it is likely that he had given to the son of Uri that strong natural aptitude, and those opportunities of gaining mechanical skill, with an ultimate view to this responsible office. Notwithstanding his grand duty was to conform with scrupulous fidelity to the pattern furnished, there was still plenty of room for inventive talent, and tasteful exactness in the execution ; and his natural and acquired gifts were enlarged and invigorated for the important work. 6. **I have given with him Aholiab** — He belonged to the tribe of Dan, one of the least influential and honourable in Israel ; and here, too, we can trace the evidence of wise and paternal design, in choosing the colleague or assistant of Bezaleel from an inferior tribe. (Cf. I Corinthians, 12. 14-25 ; also Mark, 6. 7). **all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom** — At that period, when one spirit pervaded all Israel, it was not the man full of heavenly genius who presided over the work, but all who contributed their skill, experience, and labour, in rendering the smallest assistance, that showed their piety and devotedness to the Divine service. In like manner, it was at the commencement of the Christian church (Acts, 6. 5 ; 18. 2). 12-17. **Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep** — The reason for the fresh inculcation of the fourth commandment at this particular period was, that the great ardour and eagerness with which all classes betook themselves to the construction of the tabernacle, exposed them to the temptation of encroaching on the sanctity of the appointed day of rest. They might suppose that the erection of the tabernacle was a sacred work, and that it would be a high merit, an acceptable tribute, to prosecute the undertaking without the interruption of a day's repose ; and therefore the caution here given, at the commencement of the undertaking, was a seasonable admonition. 18. **tables of stone, written with the finger of God** — containing the ten commandments (ch. 24. 12), called "tables of testimony," because God testified His will in them.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

**1-35. THE GOLDEN CALF. I. when the people saw that Moses delayed** — they supposed that he had lost his way in the darkness or perished in the fire. **the people gathered themselves together**

unto Aaron — rather “against” Aaron in a tumultuous manner, to compel him to do what they wished. The incidents related in this chapter disclose a state of popular sentiment and feeling among the Israelites that stands in singular contrast to the tone of profound and humble reverence they displayed at the giving of the law. Within a space of little more than thirty days, their impressions were dissipated; and although they were still encamped upon ground, which they had every reason to regard as holy; although the cloud of glory that capped the summit of Sinai was still before their eyes, affording a visible demonstration of their being in close contact, or rather in the immediate presence, of God, they acted as if they had entirely forgotten the impressive scenes of which they had been so recently the witnesses. **said unto him, Up, make us gods; which shall go before us** — The *Hebrew* word rendered gods is simply the name of God in its plural form. The image made was single, and therefore it would be imputing to the Israelites a greater sin than they were guilty of, to charge them with renouncing the worship of the true God for idols. The fact is, that they required, like children, to have something to strike their senses, and as the Shechinah, “the glory of God,” of which they had hitherto enjoyed the sight, was now veiled, they wished for some visible material object as the symbol of the Divine presence, which should go before them as the pillar of fire had done. 2. **Aaron said . . . Break off . . . earrings** — It was not an Egyptian custom for young men to wear earrings, and the circumstance, therefore, seems to point out “the mixed rabble,” who were chiefly *foreign* slaves, as the ringleaders in this insurrection. In giving direction to break their earrings, Aaron probably calculated in gaining time; or, perhaps, on their covetousness and love of finery proving stronger than their idolatrous propensity. If such were his expectations, they were doomed to signal disappointment. Better to have calmly and earnestly remonstrated with them, or to have preferred duty to expediency, leaving the issue in the hands of Providence. 3. **all the people break off the golden earrings** — The Egyptian rings, as seen on the monuments, were round, massy plates of metal; and as it was rings of this sort the Israelites wore, their size and number must, in the general collection, have produced a large store of the precious material. 4. **fashioned it with a graving-tool, after he had made it a molten calf** — The words are transposed, and the rendering should be, “he framed with a graving-tool the image to be made, and having poured the liquid gold into the mould, he made it a molten calf.” It is not said whether it was of life size, whether it was of solid gold or merely a wooden frame covered with plates of gold. This idol seems to have been the god Apis, the chief deity of the Egyptians, worshipped at Memphis under the form of a live ox, three years old. It was distinguished by a triangular white spot on its forehead and other peculiar marks. Images of it in the form of a whole ox, or of a calf’s head on the end of a pole were very common; and it makes a great figure on the monuments, where it is represented in the van of all processions, as borne aloft on men’s shoulders. **they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the**

**land of Egypt**— It is inconceivable, that they who but a few weeks before had witnessed such amazing demonstrations of the true God, could have suddenly sunk to such a pitch of infatuation and brutish stupidity, as to imagine that human art or hands could make a god that should go before them. But it must be borne in mind, that though by election and in name they were the people of God, they were as yet, in feelings and associations, in habits and taste, little, if at all, different from Egyptians. They meant the calf to be an image, a visible sign or symbol of Jehovah, so that their sin consisted not in a breach of the FIRST but of the SECOND commandment. 5, 6. **Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord**— a remarkable circumstance, strongly confirmatory of the view that they had not renounced the worship of Jehovah, but in accordance with Egyptian notions, had formed an image with which they had been familiar, to the visible symbol of the Divine presence. But there seems to have been much of the revelry that marked the feasts of the heathen. 7-14. **the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down**— Intelligence of the idolatrous scene enacted at the foot of the mount was communicated to Moses in language borrowed from human passions and feelings, and the judgment of a justly offended God pronounced in terms of just indignation against the gross violation of the so recently promulgated laws. **make of thee a great nation**— Care must be taken not to suppose this language as betokening any change or vacillation in the Divine purpose. The covenant made with the patriarchs had been ratified in the most solemn manner; it *could* not and never was intended that it *should* be broken. But the manner in which God spoke to Moses served two important purposes— it tended to develop the faith and intercessory patriotism of the Hebrew leader, and to excite the serious alarm of the people, that God would reject them and deprive them of the privileges they had fondly fancied were so secure. 15-18. **Moses turned, and went down from the mount**— The plain, Er-Raheh, is not visible from the top of Jebel Musa, nor can the mount be descended on the side toward that valley; hence Moses and his companion who on duty had patiently waited his return in the hollow of the mountain's brow, heard the shouting some time before they actually saw the camp. 19. **Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands**— The arrival of the leader, like the appearance of a spectre, arrested the revelers in the midst of their carnival, and his act of righteous indignation, when he dashed on the ground the tables of the law, in token that as they had so soon departed from their covenant relation, God would withdraw the peculiar privileges that He had promised them— that act, together with the righteous measures that followed, forms one of the most striking scenes recorded in sacred history. 20. **he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, &c.**— It has been supposed that the gold was dissolved by *natron*, or some chemical substance. But there is no mention of solubility here, or in Deuteronomy, 9. 21; it was "burned in the fire," to cast it into ingots of suitable size for the operations which follow—"grounded to powder;" the powder of malleable metals can be

ground so fine as to resemble dust from the wings of a moth or butterfly; and these dust particles will float in water for hours, and in a running stream for days. These operations of grinding were intended to show contempt for such worthless gods, and the Israelites would be made to remember the humiliating lesson by the state of the water they had drank for a time. [NAPIER.] Others think that as the idolatrous festivals were usually ended with great use of sweet wine, the nauseous draught of the gold dust would be a severe punishment (Cf. 2 Kings, 23. 6, 15; 2 Chronicles, 15. 16; 34. 7). 22. **Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot** — Aaron cuts a poor figure, making a shuffling excuse and betraying more dread of the anger of Moses than of the Lord (Cf. Deuteronomy, 9. 20). 25. **naked** — either unarmed and defenseless, or ashamed from a sense of guilt. Some think they were literally naked, as the Egyptians performed some of their rites in this indecent manner. 26-28. **Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said** — the camp is supposed to have been protected by a rampart after the attack of the Amalekites. **Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me** — The zeal and courage of Moses was astonishing, considering he opposed himself to an intoxicated mob. The people were separated into two divisions, and those who were the boldest and most obstinate in vindicating their idolatry were put to death, while the rest, who withdrew in shame or sorrow, was spared. 29. **Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord** — or ye have consecrated yourselves to-day. The Levites, notwithstanding the dejection of Aaron, distinguished themselves by their zeal for the honour of God and their conduct in doing the office of executioners on this occasion; and this was one reason of their being appointed to a high and honourable office in the service of the sanctuary. 30-33. **Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin** — Moses laboured to show the people the heinous nature of their sin, and bring them to repentance. But not content with that he hastened more earnestly to intercede for them. 32. **blot me . . . out of thy book** — an allusion to the registering of the living, and erasing the names of those who die. What warmth of affection did he evince for his brethren! how fully was he animated with the true spirit of a patriot, when he professed his *willingness* to die for them. But Christ actually died for His people (Romans, 5. 8). 35. **the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf** — No immediate judgments were inflicted, but this early lapse into idolatry was always mentioned as an aggravation of their subsequent apostacies.

### CHAPTER XXXIII

**1-23. THE LORD REFUSETH TO GO WITH THE PEOPLE. I. the Lord said** — rather “had” said unto Moses. The conference detailed in this chapter must be considered as having occurred prior to the pathetic intercession of Moses, recorded at the close of the preceding chapter; and the historian, having mentioned the fact of his earnest and painful anxiety, under the overwhelming pressure of which he poured forth that intercessory prayer for his apos-

tate countrymen, now enters on a detailed account of the circumstances. 3. **I will not go up . . . lest I consume thee**—Here the Lord is represented as determined to do what he afterward did not. (See ch. 32. 10.) 4. **when the people heard these evil things from Moses on his descent from the mount.** 5. **put off thy ornaments.**—In seasons of mourning, it is customary with Eastern people to lay aside all gewgaws, and divest themselves of their jewels, their gold, and every thing rich and splendid in their dress. This token of their sorrow, the Lord required of his offending people. **that I may know what to do unto thee**—The language is accommodated to the feeble apprehensions of men. God judges the state of the heart by the tenor of the conduct. In the case of the Israelites, He cherished a design of mercy; and the moment he discerned the first symptoms of contrition, by their stripping off their ornaments, as penitents conscious of their error, and sincerely sorrowful, this fact added its weight to the fervency of Moses' prayers, and gave them prevalence with God in behalf of the people. 7. **Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp**—Not the tabernacle, of which a pattern had been given him, for it was not yet erected, but his own tent—conspicuous as that of the leader—in a part of which he heard causes, and communed with God about the people's interests; hence called "the tabernacle of the congregation," and the withdrawal of which, in abhorrence from a polluted camp, was regarded as the first step in the total abandonment with which God had threatened them. 8. **all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door**—Its removal produced deep and universal consternation; and it is easy to conceive how anxiously all eyes would be directed toward it; how rapidly the happy intelligence would spread, when a phenomenon was witnessed from which an encouraging hope could be founded. 9-II. **the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle**—How would the downcast hearts of the people revive—how would the tide of joy swell in every bosom, when the symbolic cloud was seen slowly and majestically to descend, and stand at the entrance of the tabernacle! **as Moses entered**—It was when he appeared as their mediator—when he repaired from day to day to intercede for them, that welcome token of assurance was given that his advocacy prevailed, that Israel's sin was forgiven, and that God would again be gracious. 18-23. **I beseech thee, show me thy glory**—This is one of the mysterious scenes described in the Bible, he had, for his comfort and encouragement, a splendid and full display of the Divine majesty, not in its unveiled effulgence, but as far as the weakness of humanity would admit. The face, hand, back parts, are to be understood figuratively.

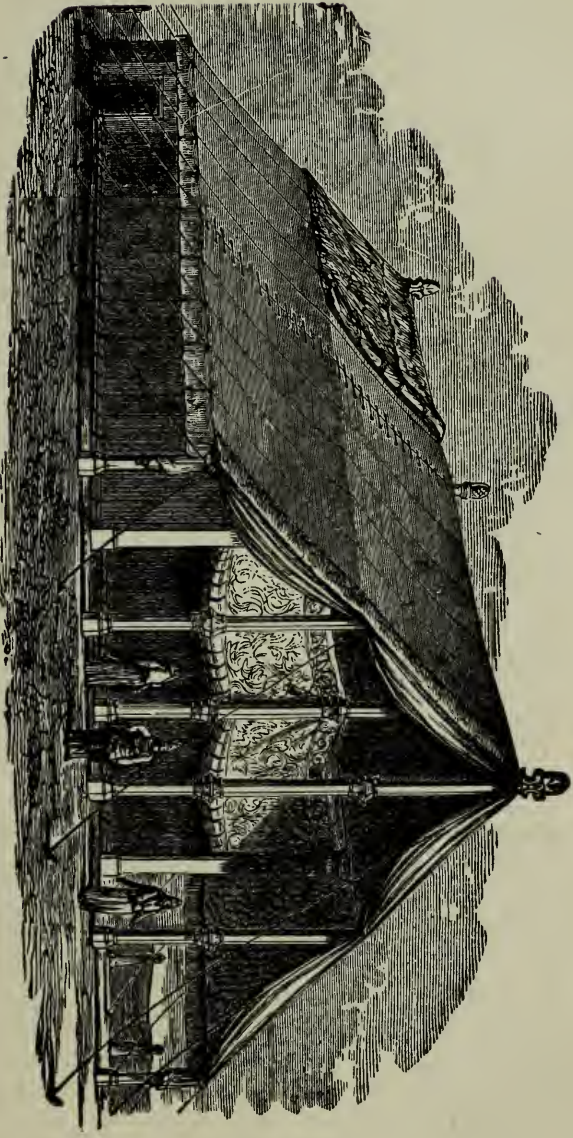
## CHAPTER XXXIV.

1-35. THE TABLES ARE RENEWED. I. **the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first**—God having been reconciled to repentant Israel, through the earnest intercession, the successful mediation of Moses, means were to be

taken for the restoration of the broken covenant. Intimation was given, however, in a most intelligible and expressive manner, that the favour was to be restored with some memento of the rupture; for at the former time God himself had provided the materials, as well as written upon them. Now, Moses was to prepare the stone tables, and God was only to retrace the characters originally inscribed for the use and guidance of the people. 2. **present thyself . . . to me in the top of the mount** — Not absolutely the highest peak; for as the cloud of the Shechinah usually abode on the summit, and yet (*v.* 5) it “descended;” the plain inference is, that Moses was to station himself at a point not far distant, but still below the loftiest pinnacle. 3. **no man shall come up with thee . . . neither . . . flocks nor herds** — All these enactments were made in order that the law might be a second time renewed with the solemnity and sanctity that marked its first delivery. The whole transaction was ordered so as to impress the people with an awful sense of the holiness of God; and that it was a matter of no trifling moment to have subjected him, so to speak, to the necessity of re-delivering the law of the ten commandments. 4. **Moses . . . took in his hand the two tables of stone** — As he had no attendant to divide the labour of carrying them, it is evident that they must have been light, and of no great dimensions — probably flat slabs of shale or slate, such as abound in the mountainous region of Horeb. An additional proof of their comparatively small size appears in the circumstance of their being deposited in the ark of the most holy place (*ch.* 25. 10). 5. **the Lord descended in the cloud** — After graciously hovering over the tabernacle, it seems to have resumed its usual position on the summit of the mount. It was the shadow of God manifest to the outward senses; and, at the same time, of God manifest in the flesh. The emblem of a cloud seems to have been chosen to signify that, although He was pleased to make known much about himself, there was more veiled from mortal view. It was to check presumption, and engender awe, and give a humble sense of human attainments in Divine knowledge, as now man sees — but darkly. 6. **the Lord passed by before him** — in this remarkable scene, God performed what He had promised to Moses the day before. **proclaimed, The Lord . . . merciful and gracious** — At an earlier period He had announced himself to Moses, in the glory of His self-existent and eternal majesty, as “I am;” now He makes himself known in the glory of His grace and goodness — attributes that were to be illustriously displayed in the future history and experience of the church. Being about to republish his law — the sin of the Israelites being forgiven, and the deed of pardon about to be signed and sealed, by renewing the terms of the former covenant — it was the most fitting time to proclaim the extent of the Divine mercy which was to be displayed, not in the case of Israel only, but of all who offend. 8-26. **Moses bowed . . . and worshipped** — In the East, people bow the head to royalty, and are silent when it passes by, while in the West, they take off their hats and shout. 9. **he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us** — On this proclamation he, in the overflowing benevo-



Tabernacle restored.





lence of his heart, founded an earnest petition for the Divine presence being continued with the people; and God was pleased to give his favourable answer to his intercession by a renewal of His promise under the form of a covenant, repeating the leading points that formed the conditions of the former national compact. 27, 28. **the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words**—*i. e.*, the ceremonial and judicial injunctions comprehended above (v. 11-26); while the re-writing of the ten commandments on the newly prepared slabs was done by God himself (Cf. Deuteronomy, 10. 1-4.) **he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights**—As long as formerly, being sustained for the execution of his special duties by the miraculous power of God. A special cause is assigned for his protracted fast on this second occasion (Deuteronomy, 9. 18). 20. **Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone when he talked with him**—It was an intimation of the exalted presence into which he had been admitted, and of the glory he had witnessed (2 Corinthians, 3. 18), and in that view, it was a badge of his high office as the ambassador of God. No testimonial needed to be produced. He bore his credentials on his very face; and whether this extraordinary effulgence was a permanent or merely temporary distinction, it cannot be doubted that this reflected glory was given him as an honour before all the people. 30. **they were afraid to come nigh him**—their fear arose from a sense of guilt—the beaming radiance of his countenance made him appear to their awe-struck conscience a flaming minister of heaven. 33. **he put a veil upon his face**—That veil was with the greatest propriety removed when speaking with the Lord, for every one appears unveiled to the eye of Omniscience; but it was removed on returning to the people—and this was emblematic of the dark and shadowy character of that dispensation (2 Corinthians, 3. 13, 14).

## CHAPTER XXXV.

1-35. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TABERNACLE. 1. **Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel, &c.**—On the occasion referred to in the opening of this chapter, the Israelites were specially reminded of the design to erect a magnificent tabernacle for the regular worship of God, as well as of the leading articles that were required to furnish that sacred edifice. (See chs. 25, 27, 30, 31.) 20, 21. **All the congregation of Israel departed from the presence of Moses**—No exciting harangues were made, nor had the people Bibles at home in which they could compare the requirements of their leader and see if these things were so. But they had no doubt as to his bearing to them the will of God, and they were impressed with so strong a sense of its being their duty, that they made a spontaneous offer of the best and most valuable treasures they possessed. **they came, every one whose heart stirred him up**—One powerful element doubtless of this extraordinary open-hearted liberality, was the remembrance of their recent transgression, which made them “zealous of good works” (Cf. 2 Corinthians, 7. 11). But along with this motive,

there were others of a higher and nobler kind — a principle of love to God and devotedness to His service, an anxious desire to secure the benefit of His presence, and gratitude for the tokens of His Divine favour — it was under the combined influence of these considerations that the people were so willing and ready to pour their contributions into that exchequer of the sanctuary. **every one whom his spirit made willing** — Human nature is always the same, and it is implied that while an extraordinary spirit of pious liberality reigned in the bosoms of the people at large, there were exceptions — some who were too fond of the world, who loved their possessions more than their God, and who could not part with these; no, not for the service of the tabernacle. 22. **they came, both men and women, &c.** — *lit.*, “the men over and above the women;” a phraseology which implies that the women acted a prominent part, presented their offerings *first*, and then were followed by as many of their male companions as were similarly disposed. **brought bracelets, &c.** — Money in the form of coins or bullion there was none in that early age. What money passed current with the merchant consisted of rings which were weighed, and principally of ornaments for personal decoration. Astonishment at the abundance of their ornaments is at an end when we learn that costly and elegant ornaments abounded in proportion as clothing was simple and scarce among the Egyptians, and some, entirely divested of clothing, yet wore rich necklaces. [HENGSTENBERG.] Among people with Oriental sentiments and tastes, scarcely any stronger proof could have been given of the power of religion than their willingness not only to lay aside, but to devote those much-valued trinkets to the house of God; and thus all, like the Eastern sages, laid the best they had at the service of God. 30. **See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, &c.** — Moses had made this communication before. But now that the collection had been made, the materials were contributed, and the operations of building about to be commenced, it was with the greatest propriety he reminded the people that the individuals intrusted with the application of their gold and silver had been nominated to the work by authority to which all would bow. 35. **Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart** — A statement which not only testifies that skill in art and science is a direct gift from God, but that weaving was especially the business of men in Egypt (see ch. 38. 22; 39. 22, 27), and in perfect harmony with the testimony of the monuments is the account given by Moses to the artists who were divinely taught the arts necessary for the embellishment of the tabernacle. Others, whose limited means did not admit of these expensive contributions, offered their gratuitous services in fabricating such articles of tapestry as were needed; arts which the Israelitish females learned as bondswomen, in the houses of Egyptian princes.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

**1-38. OFFERINGS DELIVERED TO THE WORKMEN. 1. Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, &c.** — Here is an illustrious example of zeal and activity in the work of the Lord. No unnecessary delay was allowed to take place; and from the moment the first pole was stuck in the ground till the final completion of the sacred edifice, he and his associates laboured with all the energies both of mind and body engaged in the work. And what was the mainspring of their arduous and untiring diligence? They could be actuated by none of the ordinary motives that give impulse to human industry, by no desire for the acquisition of gain; no ambition for honour; no view of gratifying a mere love of power in directing the labours of a large body of men. They felt the stimulus—the strong irresistible impulse of higher and holier motives—obedience to the authority, zeal for the glory and love to the service of God. **3. they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning, &c.**—Moses, in common with other Oriental magistrates, had his morning levees for receiving the people (see ch. 18. 13), and it was while he was performing his magisterial duties that the people brought unto him freewill offerings every morning. Some who had nothing but their manual labour to give would spend a great part of the night in hastening to complete their self-imposed task before the early dawn; others might find their hearts constrained by silent meditations on their bed to open their coffers and give part of their hoarded treasure to the pious object. All whose hearts were touched by piety, penitence or gratitude, repaired with eager haste into the presence of Moses, not as heretofore, to have their controversies settled, but to lay on his tribunal their contributions to the sanctuary of God (2 Corinthians, 9. 7). **they (the workmen) received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought, &c.**—It appears that the building was begun, after the first few contributions were made; it was progressively carried, and no necessity occurred to suspend operations, even for the shortest interval, from want of the requisite materials. **5. they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough, &c.**—By the calculations which the practiced eyes of the workmen enabled them to make, they were unanimously of opinion that the supply already far exceeded the demand, and that no more contributions were required. Such a report reflects the highest honour on their character as men of the strictest honour and integrity, who, notwithstanding they had command of an untold amount of the most precious things, and might, without any risk of human discovery, have appropriated much to their own use, were too high principled for such acts of speculation. Forthwith, a proclamation was issued to stop further contributions. **35. he made a veil of blue**—the second or inner veil, which separated the holy from the most holy place, embroidered with cherubim and of great size and thickness. **37. made an hanging for the . . . door**—curtains of elaborately wrought needlework are often suspended

over the entrance to tents of the great nomad sheiks, and throughout Persia, at the entrance of summer tents, mosques and palaces. They are preferred as cooler and more elegant than wooden doors. This chapter contains an instructive narrative: it is the first instance of donations made for the worship of God, given from the wages of the people's sufferings and toils. They were acceptable to God (Philippians, 4. 18), and if the Israelites showed such liberality, how much more should those whose privilege it is to live under the Christian dispensation (1 Corinthians, 6. 20 ; 16. 2).

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

**1-29. FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE. I. Bezaleel made the ark**—The description here given of the things within the sacred edifice is almost word for word the same as that contained in ch. 25. It is not on that account to be regarded as a useless repetition of minute particulars ; for by the enumeration of these details, it can be seen how exactly every thing was fashioned according to the "pattern shown on the mount ;" and the knowledge of this exact correspondence between the prescription and the execution was essential to the purposes of the fabric. **6-10. made the mercyseat of pure gold**—To construct a figure, whether the body of a beast or a man, with two extended wings, measuring from two to three feet from tip to tip, with the hammer, out of a solid piece of gold, was what few, if any, artisans of the present day could accomplish. **17-22. he made the candlestick of pure gold**—Practical readers will be apt to say, "Why do such works with the hammer, when they could have been cast so much easier—a process they were well acquainted with?" The only answer that can be given is, that it was done according to order. We have no doubt but there were reasons for so distinctive an order, something significant, which has not been revealed to us. [NAPIER.] The whole of that sacred building was arranged with a view to inculcate through every part of its apparatus, the great fundamental principles of revelation. Every object was symbolical of important truth—every piece of furniture was made the hieroglyphic of a doctrine or a duty—on the floor and along the sides of that movable edifice was exhibited, by emblematic signs addressed to the eye, the whole remedial scheme of the gospel. How far this spiritual instruction was received by every successive generation of the Israelites, it may not be easy to determine. But the tabernacle, like the law of which it was a part, was a schoolmaster to Christ ; and just as the walls of schools are seen studded with pictorial figures, by which the children, in a manner level to their capacities and suited to arrest their volatile minds, are kept in constant and familiar remembrance of the lessons of piety and virtue ; so the tabernacle was intended by its furniture and all its arrangements to serve as a "shadow of good things to come." In this view, the minute description given in this chapter respecting the ark and mercyseat, the table of show-bread, the candlestick, the altar of incense and the holy oil were of the greatest utility and im-

portance; and though there are a few things that were merely ornamental appendages, such as the knops and the flowers, yet, in introducing these into the tabernacle, God displayed the same wisdom and goodness as He has done by introducing real flowers into the kingdom of nature to engage and gratify the eye of man.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

**1-31. FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE. I. the altar of burnt offering**—The repetitions are continued, in which may be traced the exact conformity of the execution to the order. **8. lever of brass . . . of the looking-glasses of the women**—the word *mirrors* should have been used, as those implements usually round, inserted into a handle of wood, stone or metal, were made of brass, silver or bronze, highly polished. [WILKINSON.] It was customary for the Egyptian women to carry mirrors with them to the temples; and whether by taking the looking-glasses of the Hebrew women Moses designed to put it out of their power to follow a similar practice at the tabernacle, or whether the supply of brass from other sources in the camp was exhausted, it is interesting to learn how zealously and to a vast extent they surrendered those valued accompaniments of the female toilet. **of the women assembling . . . at the door**—not priestesses, but females of pious character and influence, who frequented the courts of the sacred building (Luke, 2. 37), and whose parting with their mirrors, like the cutting the hair of the Nazarites, was their renouncing the world for a season. [HENGSTENBERG.] **9. the court**—It occupied a space of one hundred and fifty feet by seventy-five, and it was inclosed by curtains of fine linen about eight feet high, suspended on brazen or copper pillars. Those curtains were secured by rods fastened to the top, and kept extended by being fastened to pins stuck in the ground. **10. hooks**—the hooks of the pillars in the court were for hanging up the carcasses of the sacrificial beasts—those on the pillars at the entry of the tabernacle were for hanging the sacerdotal robes and other things used in the service. **11. sockets**—mortices or holes in which the end of the pillars stood. **17. chapiters**—or capitals of the pillars, were wooden posts which ran along their top, to which were attached the hooks for the hangings. **18. the height in the breadth**—or in the measure. The sense is that the hangings of the court gate, which was twenty cubits wide, were of the same height as the hangings all round the court. [WALL.] **21. This is the sum of the tabernacle**—Having completed his description of the component parts of the tabernacle, the inspired historian digresses into a statement respecting the gold and silver employed in it, the computation being made according to an order of Moses—by the Levites, under the direction of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son. **24. twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels**—equivalent to £150,000 sterling. **25. the silver of them that were numbered**—603,550 men at half a shekel each would contribute 301,775 shekels; which, at 2s. 4d. each, amount to £35,207 sterling. It may seem difficult to imagine

how the Israelites should be possessed of so much wealth in the desert; but it should be remembered that they were enriched first by the spoils of the Egyptians, and afterward by those of the Amalekites. Besides, it is highly probable that during their sojourn they traded with the neighbouring nations who bordered on the wilderness. [HEWLETT.]

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

**1-43. GARMENTS OF THE PRIESTS. 1. cloths of service—**official robes. The ephod of the high priest, the robe of ephod, the girdle of needlework and the broided coat were all of fine linen; for on no material less delicate could such elaborate symbolical figures have been portrayed in embroidery, and all beautified with the same brilliant colours. (See ch. 28.) **3. cut the gold into wires to work it—***i. e.*, the metal was beaten with a hammer into thin plates—cut with scissors or some other instrument into long slips—then rounded into filaments or threads. “Cloth of golden tissue is not uncommon on the monuments, and specimens of it have been found rolled about mummies; but it is not easy to determine whether the gold thread was originally interwoven or subsequently inserted by the embroiderer. [TAYLOR.] **30. a writing, like to the engravings of a signet—**the seal-ring worn both by ancient and modern Egyptians on the little finger of the right hand, contained, inscribed on a cornelion or other precious stone, along with the owner’s name, a religious sentiment or sacred symbol, intimating that he was the servant of God, or expressive of trust in Him. And it was to this practice the inscription on the high priest alludes (Cf. Joshua, 3. 33). **34. the coverings of rams’ skins dyed red—**(See ch. 25. 7.) It was probably red morocco leather, and “badgers’ skins,” rather “the skins of the *tahash*, supposed to be the dugong, or dolphin of the Red Sea, the skin of which is still used by the Arabs under the same appellation.” [Goss.] **43. Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded—**A formal inspection was made on the completion of the tabernacle, not only with a view to have the work transferred from the charge of the workmen, but to ascertain whether it corresponded with “the pattern.” The result of a careful and minute survey showed that every plank, curtain, altar and vase, had been most accurately made of the form, and in the place designated by the Divine architect—and Moses, in accepting it off their hands, thanked God for them, and begged Him to bless them.

## CHAPTER XL.

**1-38. THE TABERNACLE REARED AND ANOINTED. 2. on the first day of the first month—**From a careful consideration of the incidents recorded to have happened after the exodus (ch. 12. 2; 13. 4; 19. 1; 20. 18. 34. 23, &c.), it has been computed that the



work of the tabernacle was commenced within six months after that emigration, and consequently, that other six months had been occupied in building it. So long a period spent in preparing the materials of a movable pavilion, it would be difficult to understand were it not for what we are told of the vast dimensions of the tabernacle, as well as the immense variety of curious and elaborate workmanship which its different articles of furniture required. **the tabernacle**—the entire edifice. **the tent**—the covering that surmounted it (*v.* 19). 15. **anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father**—The sacred oil was used, but it does not appear that the ceremony was performed exactly in the same manner; for although the anointing oil was sprinkled over the garments both of Aaron and his sons (ch. 29. 21; Leviticus, 8. 30), it was not poured over the heads of the latter. This distinction was reserved for the high priest (ch. 29. 7; Leviticus, 8. 12; Psalm 133. 2). 16. **Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him**—On his part, the same scrupulous fidelity was shown in conforming to the “pattern” in the disposition of the furniture, as had been displayed by the workmen in the erection of the edifice. 33. **so Moses finished the work**—Though it is not expressly recorded in this passage, yet, from what took place on all similar occasions, there is reason to believe that on the inauguration day, the people were summoned from their tents,—were all drawn up a vast assemblage, yet in calm and orderly arrangement, around the newly erected tabernacle. 34. **a cloud**—*lit.*, “The” cloud,—the mystic cloud which was the well-known symbol of the Divine presence. After remaining at a great distance from them on the summit of the mount, it appeared to be in motion; and if many among them had a secret misgiving about the issue, how would the fainting heart revive, the interest of the moment intensely increase, and the tide of joy swell in every bosom, when that symbolic cloud was seen slowly and majestically descending toward the plain below, and covering the tabernacle. The entire and universal concealment of the tabernacle within the folds of an impervious cloud was not without a deep and instructive meaning,—it was a protection to the sacred edifice from the burning heats of the Arabian climate,—it was a token of the Divine presence,—and it was also an emblem of the Mosaic dispensation, which, though it was a revelation from heaven, yet left many things hid in obscurity; for it was a dark cloud compared with the bright cloud, which betokened the clearer and fuller discoveries of the Divine character and glory in the gospel (Matthew, 17. 5). **the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle**—*i. e.*, light and fire, a created splendour, which was the peculiar symbol of God (1 John, 1. 5). Whether this light was inherent in the cloud or not, it emanated from it on this occasion, and making its entry, not with the speed of a lightning flash, as if it were merely an electric spark, but in majestic splendour, it passed through the outer porch into the interior of the most holy place (1 Kings, 8. 10; John, 1. 14). Its miraculous character is shown by the fact, that, though “it filled the tabernacle,” not a curtain or any article of furniture was so much as singed. 35. **Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation**—How

does this circumstance show the incapacity of man, in his present state, to look upon the unveiled perfections of the Godhead. Moses could not endure the unclouded effulgence, nor the sublimest of the prophets (Isaiah, 6. 5). But what neither Moses nor the most eminent of God's messengers to the ancient church through the weakness of nature could endure, we can all now do by an exercise of faith; looking unto Jesus, who reflected with chastened radiance the brightness of the Father's glory; and who, having as the Forerunner for us, entered within the veil, has invited us to come boldly to the mercyseat. While Moses was compelled, through the influence of overwhelming awe, to stand aloof, and could not enter the tabernacle, Christ entered into the holy place not made with hands; nay, He is himself the true tabernacle, filled with the glory of God, ever with the grace and truth which the Shechinah typified. What reason have we to thank God for Jesus Christ, who, while He himself was the brightness of the Father's glory, yet exhibited that glory in so mild and attractive a manner, as to allure us to draw near with confidence and love into the Divine presence! 36. **when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle** — In journeying through the sandy trackless deserts of the East, the use of torches, exhibiting a cloud of smoke by day and of fire by night, has been resorted to from time immemorial. The armies of Darius and Alexander were conducted on their marches in this manner. [FABER.] The Arab caravans in the present day observe the same custom; and materials for these torches are stored up among other necessary preparations for a journey. Live fuel, hoisted in chafing-dishes at the end of long poles, and being seen at a great distance, serves, by the smoke in the daytime and the light at night, as a better signal for march than the sound of a trumpet, which is not heard at the extremities of a large camp. [LABORDE.] This usage, and the miracle related by Moses, mutually illustrate each other. The usage leads us to think that the miracle was necessary, and worthy of God to perform; and, on the other hand, the miracles of the cloudy pillar, affording double benefit of shade by day and light at night, implies not only that the usage was not unknown to the Hebrews, but supplied all the wants which they felt in common with other travelers through those dreary regions. [FABER, HESS, GRANDPIERRE.] But its peculiar appearance, unvarying character, and regular movements, distinguished it from all the common atmospheric phenomena. It was an invaluable boon to the Israelites, and being recognized by all classes among that people as the symbol of the Divine presence, it guided their journeys and regulated their encampments (Cf. Psalms 29. 105). 38. **the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle, &c.** — While it had hitherto appeared sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, it was now found on the tabernacle only; so that from the moment that sanctuary was erected, and the glory of the Lord had filled the sacred edifice, the Israelites had to look to the place which God had chosen to put His name there, in order that they might enjoy the benefit of a heavenly Guide (Numbers, 9. 15-23). In like manner the church had Divine revelation for its guide from the first; — long before

the WORD of God existed in a written form ; but ever since the setting up of that sacred canon, it rests on that as its tabernacle, and there only is it to be found. It accompanies us wherever we are or go, just as the cloud led the way of the Israelites. It is always accessible — can be carried in our pockets when we walk abroad ; it may be engraven on the inner tablet of our memories and our hearts ; and so true, faithful and complete a guide is it, that there is not a scene of duty or of trial through which we may be called to pass in the world, but it furnishes a clear, a safe, and unerring direction (Colossians, 3. 16).

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**GOLDEN CANDLESTICK**  
(ARCH OF TEST.)

# LEVITICUS.

## CHAPTER I.

**1-17. BURNT OFFERINGS OF THE HERD. 1. the Lord . . . spake . . . out of the tabernacle** — The laws that are contained in the previous record were delivered, either to the people publicly from Sinai or to Moses privately, on the summit of that mountain ; but, on the completion of the tabernacle, the remainder of the law was announced to the Hebrew leader by an audible voice from the Divine glory which surmounted the mercyseat. **2. Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them** — If the subject of communication were of a temporal nature the Levites were excluded ; but if it were a spiritual matter the whole tribes were comprehended under this name (Deuteronomy, 27. 12). **If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord** — The directions given here relate solely to voluntary or free-will offerings, those rendered over and above such, as being of standing and universal obligation, could not be dispensed with or commuted for any other kind of offering (Exodus, 29. 38 ; ch. 23, 37 ; Numbers, 28. 3, 11-27, &c.). **bring your offering of the cattle, &c.** — *i. e.*, those animals that were not only tame, innocent and gentle, but useful and adapted for food. This rule excluded horses, dogs, swine, camels and asses, which were used in sacrifice by some heathen nations, beasts and birds of prey, as also hares and deers. **3. a burnt sacrifice** — so called from its being wholly consumed on the altar ; no part of it was eaten either by the priests or the offerer. It was designed to propitiate the anger of God incurred by original sin or by particular transgressions ; and its entire combustion indicated the self-dedication of the offerer, his whole nature, his body and soul, as necessary to form a sacrifice acceptable to God (Romans, 12. 1 ; Philipians, 1. 20). This was the most ancient as well as the most conspicuous mode of sacrifice. **a male without blemish** — no animal was allowed to be offered that had any deformity or defect. Among the Egyptians a minute inspection was made by the priest, and the bullock having been declared perfect, a certificate to that effect being fastened to its horns with wax, was sealed with his ring and no other might be substituted. A similar process of examining the condition of the beasts brought as offerings, seems to have been adopted by the priests in Israel (John, 6. 27). **at the door of the tabernacle** — where stood the altar of burnt offering (Exodus, 40. 6), and every other place was forbidden, under the highest penalty (ch. 17. 4). **4. shall put his hand upon the head** — This was a significant act which implied not only that the offerer devoted the animal to God but that he confessed his consciousness of sin and prayed that his guilt and its punishment might be transferred to the victim. **and it shall be** — rather, “that it may be an acceptable atonement.” **5. And he shall kill the bullock** — meaning not the priest, for it was not his official duty in case of

voluntary sacrifices, but the offerer; in later times, however, the office was generally performed by Levites. **before the Lord**—on the spot where the hands had been laid upon the animal's head on the north side of the altar. **sprinkle the blood**—This was to be done by the priests. The blood being considered the life, the effusion of it was the essential part of the sacrifice, and the sprinkling of it the application of the atonement, which made the person and services of the offerer acceptable to God. The skin having been stripped off, and the carcase cut up, the various pieces were disposed on the altar in the manner best calculated to facilitate their being consumed by the fire. 8. **the fat**—that about the kidneys especially which is called "suet." 9. **But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water, &c.**—This part of the ceremony was symbolical of the *inward* purity and the holy *walk* that became acceptable worshippers. **a sweet savour unto the Lord**—is an expression of the offerers' piety but especially as a sacrificial type of Christ. 10-13. **if his offering be of the flocks**—Those who could not afford the expense of a bullock might offer a ram or a he-goat, and the same ceremonies were to be observed in the act of offering. 14-17. **if the burnt sacrifice . . . be of fowls**—The gentle nature and cleanly habits of the dove led to its selection, while all other fowls were rejected, either for the fierceness of their disposition or the grossness of their taste; and, in this case, there being, from the smallness of the animal, no blood for waste, the priest was directed to prepare it *at* the altar and sprinkle the blood. This was the offering appointed for the poor. The fowls were always offered in pairs, and the reason why Moses ordered two turtle doves or two young pigeons, was not merely to suit the convenience of the offerer but according as the latter was in season; for pigeons are sometimes quite hard and unfit for eating, at which time turtle doves are very good in Egypt and Palestine. The turtle doves are not restricted to any age, because they are always good when they appear in those countries, being birds of passage; but the age of the pigeons is particularly marked that they might not be offered to God at times when they are rejected by men. [HARMER.] It is obvious, from the varying scale of these voluntary sacrifices, that the disposition of the offerer was the thing looked to, not the costliness of his offering.

## CHAPTER II.

1-16. THE MEAT OFFERINGS. 1. **when any will offer a meat offering**—or gift, distinguishing a bloodless from a bloody sacrifice. The word "meat," however, is improper, as its meaning as now used is different from that attached at the date of our English translation. It was then applied not to "flesh" but "food," generally, and here it is applied to the flour of wheat. The meat offerings were intended as a thankful acknowledgment for the bounty of Providence; and hence, although meat offerings accompanied some of the appointed sacrifices, those here described being voluntary oblations were offered alone. **pour oil upon it**—oil

was used as butter is with us, symbolically it meant the influences of the Spirit, of which oil was the emblem as incense was of prayer. 2. **shall burn the memorial**—rather, “for a memorial,” *i. e.*, a part of it. 3. **the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron’s and his sons’**—The circumstance of a portion of it being appropriated to the use of the priests distinguishes this from a burnt offering. They alone were to partake of it within the sacred precincts as among “the most holy things.” 4. **if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven**—generally, a circular hole excavated in the floor, from one to five feet deep; the sides of which are covered with hardened plaster on which cakes are baked of the form and thickness of pancakes. (See Genesis, 18. 6.) The shape of Eastern ovens varies considerably, according to the nomadic or settled habits of the people. 5. **baken in a pan**—a thin plate, generally of copper or iron, placed on a slow fire, similar to what the country people in Scotland called a “girdle” for baking oat-meal cakes. 6. **part it in pieces and pour oil thereon**—pouring oil on bread is a common practice among Eastern people who are fond of broken bread dipped in oil, butter, and milk; oil only was used in the meat offerings, and, probably, for a symbolic reason. It is evident that these meat offerings were previously prepared by the offerer, and, when brought, the priest was to take it from his hands and burn a portion on the altar. 11. **ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord**—Nothing sweet or sour was to be offered. In the warm climates of the East leavened bread soon spoils, and hence it was regarded as the emblem of hypocrisy or corruption. Some, however, think that the chief reason of the prohibition was that leaven and honey were used in the idolatrous rites of the heathen. 12. **the oblation of the first fruits**—voluntary offerings made by individuals out of their increase, and leaven and honey might be used with these (ch. 23. 17; Numbers, 15. 20). Though presented at the altar they were not consumed but assigned by God for the use of the priests. 13. **every . . . meat offering shalt thou season with salt**—The same reasons which led to the prohibition of leaven, recommended the use of salt, if the one soon putrefies, the other possesses a strongly preservative property, and hence it became an emblem of incorruption and purity as well as of a perpetual covenant, a perfect reconciliation and lasting friendship. No injunction in the whole law was more sacredly observed than this application of salt; for, besides other uses of it, that will be noticed elsewhere, it had a typical meaning referred to by our Lord concerning the effect of the gospel on those who embrace it (Mark, 9. 49, 50); as when plentifully applied, preserves meat from spoiling, so will the gospel keep men from being corrupted by sin. And as salt was indispensable to render sacrifices acceptable to God, so the gospel brought home to the hearts of men by the Holy Ghost, is indispensably requisite to their offering up of themselves living sacrifices. [BROWN.] 14. **a meat offering of thy first fruits**—From the mention of green ears, this seems to have been a voluntary offering before the harvest, the ears being prepared in the favourite way of Eastern people, by parting

them at the fire and then beating them out for use. It was designed to be an early tribute of pious thankfulness for the earth's increase and it was offered according to the usual directions.

## CHAPTER III.

**1-17. THE PEACE OFFERING OF THE HERD. 1. if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, &c.** — "peace" being used in Scripture to denote prosperity and happiness generally, a peace offering was a voluntary tribute of gratitude for health or other benefits. In this view it was eucharistic, being a token of thanksgiving for benefits already received, or it was sometimes votive, presented in prayer for benefits wished for in future. **of the herd** — This kind of offering being of a festive character, either male or female, if without blemish, might be used, as both of them were equally good for food, and, if the circumstances of the offerer allowed it, it might be a calf. **2. he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering** — Having performed this significant act, he killed it before the door of the tabernacle and the priests sprinkled the blood round about upon the altar. **3. he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering** — The peace offering differed from the oblations formerly mentioned in this respect; that while the burnt offering was wholly consumed on the altar, and the free-will offering was partly consumed and partly assigned to the priests; in this offering the fat alone was burnt, only a small part was allotted to the priests, while the rest was granted to the offerer and his friends, thus forming a sacred feast of which the Lord, his priests and people conjointly partook, and which was symbolical of the spiritual feast, the sacred communion which, through Christ, the great peace offering, believers enjoy. (See further, chs. 19, 22). **the fat that covereth the inwards** — *i. e.*, the web-work that presents itself first to the eye on opening the belly of a cow. **the fat . . . upon the inwards** — adhering to the intestines but easily removable from them; or, according to some, that which was next the ventricle. **4-II. the two kidneys . . . of the flock . . . the whole rump** — There is, in Eastern countries, a species of sheep the tails of which are not less than four feet and a half in length. These tails are of a substance between fat and marrow. A sheep of this kind weighs sixty or seventy English pounds weight, of which the tail usually weighs fifteen pounds and upward. This species is by far the most numerous in Arabia, Syria and Palestine, and, forming probably a large portion in the flocks of the Israelites, seems to have been the kind that usually bled on the Jewish altars. The extraordinary size and deliciousness of their tails give additional importance to this law. To command by an express law the tail of a British sheep to be offered in sacrifice to God might well surprise us; but the wonder ceases when we are told of those broad-tailed Eastern sheep and of the extreme delicacy of that part which was so particularly specified in the statute. [PAXTON.] **12. if his offering be a goat** — Whether this or any of the other two animals were chosen, the same general directions

were to be followed in the ceremony of offering. 17. **ye eat neither fat nor blood**—The details given above distinctly define the fat in animals which was not to be eaten, so that all the rest, whatever adhered to other parts or was intermixed with them, might be used. The prohibition of blood rested on a different foundation, being intended to preserve their reverence for the Messiah who was to shed His blood as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. [BROWN.]

## CHAPTER IV.

1, 2. **SIN OFFERING OF IGNORANCE.** 2. **If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord**—a soul, an individual. All sins may be considered, in a certain sense, as committed “through ignorance,” error, or misapprehension of one’s true interests. The sins, however, referred to in this law were unintentional violations of the ceremonial laws, breaches made through haste or inadvertency of some negative precepts, which, if done knowingly and willfully, would have involved a capital punishment. **do against any of them**—To bring out the meaning, it is necessary to supply, “he shall bring a sin offering.”

3-35. **SIN OFFERING FOR THE PRIEST.** 3. **If the priest that is anointed do sin**—*i. e.*, the high priest in whom, considering his character as typical mediator and his exalted office, the people had the deepest interest; and whose transgressions of any part of the Divine law, therefore, whether done unconsciously or heedlessly, was a very serious offense, both as regarded himself individually, and the influence of his example. He is the person principally meant though the common order of the priesthood was included. **according to the sin of the people**—*i. e.*, bring guilt on the people. He was to take a young bullock (the age and sex being expressly mentioned), and having killed it according to the form prescribed for the burnt offerings, he was to take it into the holy place and sprinkle the atoning blood seven times before the veil, and tip with the crimson fluid the horns of the golden altar of incense, on his way to the court of the priests, a solemn ceremonial appointed only for very grave and heinous offenses, and which betokened that his sin, though done in ignorance, had vitiated all his services; nor could any official duty he engaged in be beneficial either to himself or the people, unless it were atoned for by blood. 11. **the skin of the bullock and all his flesh**—in ordinary circumstances, these were perquisites of the priests. But, in the expiation necessary for a sin of the high priest’s, after the fat of the sacrifice was offered on the altar, the carcase was carried without the camp, in order that the total combustion of it in the place of ashes might the more strikingly indicate the enormity of the transgression and the horror with which he regarded it (Cf. Hebrews, 13. 12, 13). 13. **if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance**—In consequence of some culpable neglect or misapprehension of the law, the people might contract national guilt and national expiation was necessary. The same sacrifice



was to be offered as in the former case, but with this difference in the ceremonial, that the elders or heads of the tribes, as representing the people, and being the principal aggressors in misleading the congregation, laid their hands on the head of the victim. The priest then took the blood into the holy place where, after dipping his finger in it seven times, he sprinkled the drops seven times before the veil,—this done, he returned to the court of the priests, and, ascending the altar, put some portion upon its horns; then he poured it out at the foot of the altar. The fat was the only part of the animal which was offered on the altar; for the carcass, with its appurtenances and offals, was carried without the camp into the place where the ashes were deposited and there consumed with fire. 22-26. **When a ruler hath sinned and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments**—Whatever was the form of government, the king, judge or subordinate, was the party concerned in this law. The trespass of such a civil functionary being less serious in its character and consequences than that either of the high priest or the congregation, a sin offering of inferior value was required, “a kid of the goats;” and neither was the blood carried into the sanctuary, but applied only to the altar of burnt offering, nor was the carcass taken without the camp, it was eaten by the priests-in-waiting. 27-34. **if any one of the common people sin through ignorance**—In this case the expiatory offering appointed was a female kid or a ewe lamb without blemish; and the ceremonies were exactly the same as those observed in the case of the offending ruler. In these two latter instances the blood of the sin offering was applied to the altar of burnt offering, the place where bloody sacrifices were appointed to be immolated. But the transgression of a high priest or of the whole congregation, entailing a general taint on the ritual of the tabernacle and vitiating its services, required a further explanation; and, therefore, in these cases, the blood of the sin offering was applied to the altar of incense. 35. **it shall be forgiven him**—None of these sacrifices possessed any intrinsic value sufficient to free the conscience of the sinner from the pollution of guilt or to obtain his pardon from God; but they gave a formal deliverance from a secular penalty (Hebrews, 9. 13, 14); and they were figurative representations of the full and perfect sin offering which was to be made by Christ.

## CHAPTER V.

I. TRESPASS OFFERINGS FOR CONCEALING KNOWLEDGE. I. **if a soul . . . hear the voice of swearing**—or, according to some, “the words of adjuration.” A proclamation was issued calling any one who could give information, to come before the court and bear testimony to the guilt of a criminal and the manner in which witnesses were interrogated in the Jewish courts of justice was not by swearing them directly but adjuring them by reading the words of an oath: “The voice of swearing.” The offense, then, for the expiation of which this law provides, was that of a person

who neglected or avoided the opportunity of lodging the information which it was in his power to communicate.

**2, 3. TOUCHING ANY THING UNCLEAN.** 2. **if a soul touch any unclean thing**—A person who, unknown to himself at the time, came in contact with any thing unclean, and either neglected the requisite ceremonies of purification or engaged in the services of religion, while under the taint of ceremonial defilement, might be afterward convinced that he had committed an offense.

**4-19. FOR SWEARING.** 4. **if a soul swear**—a rash oath, without duly considering the nature and consequences of the oath, perhaps inconsiderately binding himself to do any thing wrong or neglected to perform a vow to do some thing good. In all such cases a person might have transgressed one of the Divine commandments unwittingly and have been afterward brought to a sense of his delinquency. 5. **it shall be, when he shall be guilty . . . that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing**—make a voluntary acknowledgment of his sin from the impulse of his own conscience and before it come to the knowledge of the world. A previous discovery might have subjected him to some degree of punishment from which his spontaneous confession released him, but still he was considered guilty of a trespass, to expiate which he was obliged by the ceremonial law to go through certain observances. 6-14. **he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sins which he hath sinned**—A trespass offering differed from a sin offering in the following respects, that it was appointed for persons who had either done evil unwittingly or were in doubt as to their own criminality; or felt themselves in such a special situation as required sacrifices of that kind. [BROWN.] The trespass offering appointed in such cases was a female lamb or kid; if unable to make such an offering, he might bring a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons—the one to be offered for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering; or if even *that* was beyond his ability, the law would be satisfied with the tenth-part of an ephah of fine flour without oil or frankincense. 15, 16. **sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the Lord, &c.**—This is a case of sacrilege committed ignorantly, either in not paying the full due of tithes, first fruits, and similar tribute in eating of meats, which belonged to the priests alone—or he was required, along with the restitution in money, the amount of which was to be determined by the priest, to offer a ram for a trespass offering, as soon as he came to the knowledge of his involuntary fraud. 17-19. **if a soul sin . . . though he wist it not, yet he is guilty**—This also refers to holy things, and it differs from the preceding in being one of the *doubtful* cases, *i. e.*, where conscience suspects, though the understanding be in doubt whether criminality or sin has been committed. The Jewish Rabbis give as an example, the case of a person who, knowing that “the fat of the inwards” is not to be eaten, religiously abstain from the use of it; but should a dish happen to have been at table in which he had reason to suspect some portion of that meat was intermingled, and he had, inadvertently, partaken of that unlawful viand, he was bound to bring a ram as a tres-

pass offering. These provisions were all designed to impress the conscience with the sense of responsibility to God, and keep alive on the hearts of the people a salutary fear of doing any secret wrong.

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-7. TRESPASS OFFERING FOR SINS DONE WITTINGLY. 2. If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord**—This law, the record of which should have been joined with the previous chapter, was given concerning things stolen, fraudulently gotten, or wrongfully kept. The offender was enjoined to make restitution of the articles to the rightful owner, along with a fifth part out of his own possessions. But it was not enough thus to repair the injury done to a neighbour and to society; he was required to bring a trespass offering, as a token of sorrow and penitence for having hurt the cause of religion and of God. That trespass offering was a ram without blemish, which was to be made on the altar of burnt offerings, and the flesh belonged to the priests. This penalty was equivalent to a mitigated fine, but being associated with a sacred duty, the form in which the fire was inflicted served the important purpose of raising attention to the claims and reviving a sense of responsibility to God.

**8-13. THE LAW OF THE BURNT OFFERING. 9. Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering**—In this passage, Moses received instructions to be delivered to the priests respecting their official duties, and first the burnt offering, *Hebrew*, “a sacrifice, which went up in smoke.” The daily service consisted of two lambs, one offered in the morning at sunrise, the other in the evening, when the day began to decline. Both of them were consumed on the altar by means of a slow fire, before which the pieces of the sacrifice were so placed that they fed it all night. At all events, the observance of this daily sacrifice on the altar of burnt offering was a daily expression of national repentance and faith. The fire that consumed these sacrifices had been kindled from heaven at the consecration of the tabernacle, and to keep it from being extinguished, and the sacrifices from being burned with common fire, strict injunctions are here given respecting not only the removal of the ashes, but the approaching near to the fire-place in garments that were not officially “holy.”

**14-18. THE LAW OF THE MEAT OFFERING. 14. this is the law of the meat offering**—Though this was a provision for the priests and their families, it was to be regarded as “most holy;” and the way in which it was prepared was, on any meat offerings being presented, the priest carried them to the altar, and taking a handful from each of them as an oblation, salted and burnt it on the altar; the residue became the property of the priests, and was the food of those whose duty it was to attend on the service. They themselves, as well as the vessels from which they ate, were typically holy, and they were not at liberty to partake of the meat offering while they laboured under any ceremonial defilement.

**19-23. THE HIGH PRIEST'S MEAT OFFERING.** 20. **This is the offering of Aaron and of his sons**—The daily meat offering of the high priest; for though his sons are mentioned along with him, it was probably only those of his descendants who succeeded him in that high office that are meant. It was to be offered one half of it in the morning, and the other half in the evening—being daily laid by the ministering priest on the altar of burnt offering, where, being dedicated to God, it was wholly consumed. This was designed to keep him and the other attendant priests in constant remembrance, that though they were typically expiating the sins of the people, their own persons and services could meet with acceptance only through faith, which required to be daily nourished and strengthened from above.

**24-30. THE LAW OF THE SIN OFFERING.** 25. **This is the law of the sin offering**—It was slain, and the fat and inwards, after being washed and salted, were burnt upon the altar. But the rest of the carcass belonged to the officiating priest. He and his family might feast upon it—only, however, within the precincts of the tabernacle; and none else were allowed to partake of it but the members of a priestly family—and not even they, if under any ceremonial defilement. The flesh on all occasions was boiled or sodden, with the exception of the paschal lamb, which was roasted; and if an earthen vessel had been used, it being porous, and likely to imbibe some of the liquid particles, it was to be broken; if a metallic pan had been used it was to be scoured and washed with the greatest care, not because the vessel had been defiled, but the reverse—because the flesh of the sin offering having been boiled in them, those vessels were not too sacred for ordinary use. The design of all these minute ceremonies was to impress the minds, both of priests and people, with a sense of the evil nature of sin, and the care they should take to prevent the least taint of its impurities clinging to them.

## CHAPTER VII.

**1-27. THE LAW OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING.** 1. **Likewise this is the law of the trespass offering**—This chapter is a continuation of the laws that were to regulate the duty of the priests respecting the trespass offerings. The same regulations obtained in this case as in the burnt offerings—part was to be consumed on the altar, while the other part was a perquisite of the priests—some fell exclusively to the officiating minister, and was the fee for his services; others were the common share of all the priestly order, who lived upon them as their provision, and whose meetings at a common table would tend to promote brotherly harmony and friendship. 8. **the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered**—All the flesh and the fat of the burnt offerings being consumed, nothing remained to the priest but the skin. It has been thought that this was a patriarchal usage, incorporated with the Mosaic law, and that the right of the sacrificer to the skin of the victim was transmitted from the

example of Adam (see Genesis, 3. 21). 11-14. **this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings**—Besides the usual accompaniments of other sacrifices, leavened bread was offered with the peace offerings, as a thanksgiving, such bread being common at feasts. 15-17. **the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings . . . shall be eaten the same day that it is offered**—The flesh of the sacrifices was eaten on the day of the offering or on the day following. But if any part of it remained till the third day, it was, instead of being made use of, to be burned with fire. In the East, butcher-meat is generally eaten the day it is killed, and it is rarely kept a second day, so that as a prohibition was issued against any of the flesh in the peace offerings being used on the third day, it has been thought, not without reason, that this injunction must have been given to prevent a superstitious notion arising, that there was some virtue or holiness belonging to it. 18. **if any of the flesh of the sacrifice . . . be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither . . . imputed**—the sacrifice will not be acceptable to God nor profitable to him that offers it. 20. **cut off from his people**—*i. e.*, excluded from the privileges of an Israelite—lie under a sentence of excommunication. 21. **abominable unclean thing**—Some copies of the Bible read, “any reptile.” 22-27. **Ye shall eat no manner of fat**—(See ch. 3. 17.)

28-38. **THE PRIEST'S PORTION.** 29. **He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the Lord**—In order to show that the sacrifice was voluntary, the offerer was required to bring it with his own hands to the priest. The breast having been waived to and fro in a solemn manner as devoted to God, was made over to the priests; it was assigned to the use of their order generally, but the right shoulder was the perquisite of the officiating priest. 35-38. **This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron**—These verses contain a general summing up of the laws which regulate the privileges and duties of the priests. The word “anointing” is often used as synonymous with “office” or “dignity.” So that the “portion of the anointing of Aaron” probably means the provision made for the maintenance of the high priest and the numerous body of functionaries which composed the sacerdotal order. **in the day when he presented them to minister unto the Lord, &c.**—*i. e.*, from the day they approached the Lord in the duties of their ministry.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1-36. **MOSES CONSECRATETH AARON AND HIS SONS.** 2. **Take Aaron and his sons**—The consecration of Aaron and his sons had been ordered long before (Exodus, 29), but it is now described with all the details of the ceremonial, as it was gone through after the tabernacle was completed, and the regulations for the various sacrifices enacted. 3-5. **gather thou all the congregation together, &c.**—It was manifestly expedient for the Israelitish people to be satisfied that Aaron's appointment to the high dignity of the priesthood was not a personal intrusion, nor a family arrangement between him and Moses; and nothing, therefore, could be a more

prudent or necessary measure, for impressing a profound conviction of the Divine origin and authority of the priestly institution, than to summon a general assembly of the people, and in their presence perform the solemn ceremonies of inauguration, which had been prescribed by Divine authority. 6. **Moses . . . washed them with water**—At consecration they were subjected to entire ablution, though on ordinary occasions they were required, before entering upon their duties, only to wash their hands and feet. This symbolical ablution was designed to teach them the necessity of inward purity, and the imperative obligation on those who bore the vessels and conducted the services of the sanctuary to be holy. 7-9. **he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle**—The splendour of the official vestments, together with the gorgeous tiara of the high priest, was intended, doubtless, in the first instance, to produce in the minds of the people a high respect for the ministers of religion; and in the next, from the predominant use of linen, to inculcate upon Aaron and his sons the duty of maintaining unspotted righteousness in their character and lives. 10-12. **took the anointing oil, &c.**—which was designed to intimate, that persons who acted as leaders in the solemn services of worship should have the unction of the Holy One both in His gifts and graces. 14-17. **brought the bullock for the sin offering, &c.**—A timely expression of their sense of unworthiness—a public and solemn confession of their personal sins, and a transference of their guilt to the typical victim. 18-21. **brought the ram, &c.**—as a token of their entire dedication to the service of God. 22-30. **brought the other ram, &c.**—After the sin offering and burnt offering had been presented on their behalf, this was their peace offering, by which they declared the pleasure which they felt in entering upon the service of God, and being brought into close communion with Him as the ministers of His sanctuary, together with their confident reliance on His grace to help them in all their sacred duties. 33. **ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, &c.**—After all these preliminaries, they had still to undergo a week's probation in the court of the tabernacle before they obtained permission to enter into the interior of the sacred building. During the whole of that period the same sacrificial rites were observed as on the first day, and they were expressly admonished that the smallest breach of any of the appointed observances would lead to the certain forfeiture of their lives.

## CHAPTER IX.

1-24. THE PRIESTS' ENTRY INTO OFFICE. 1, 2. **Moses called . . . Take thee a young calf for a sin offering**—The directions in these sacred things were still given by Moses, the circumstances being extraordinary. But he was only the medium of communicating the Divine will to the newly-made priests. The first of their official acts was the sacrifice of another sin offering to atone for the defects of the inauguration services; and yet that sacrifice

did not consist of a bullock — the sacrifice appointed for some particular transgression ; but of a calf, perhaps, not without a significant preference to Aaron's sin in the golden calf. Then followed a burnt offering, expressive of their voluntary and entire self-devotement to the Divine service. The newly consecrated priests having done this on their own account, were called to offer a sin offering and burnt offering for the people ; ending the ceremonial by a peace offering, which was a sacred feast. This injunction "to make an atonement for himself and for the people" (*Septuagint*, "for thy family") at the commencement of his sacred functions, furnishes a striking evidence of the Divine origin of the Jewish system of worship. In all false or corrupt forms of religion the studied policy has been to inspire the people with an idea of the sanctity of the priesthood as, in point of purity and favour with the Divinity, far above the level of other men. But among the Hebrews, the priests were required to offer for the expiation of their sins as well as the humblest of the people. This imperfection of Aaron's priesthood, however, does not extend to the gospel dispensation ; for our great High Priest, who has entered for us into "the true tabernacle," "knew no sin" (Hebrews, 10, 10, 11).

8. **Aaron . . . went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering** — Whether it had been enjoined the first time, or it was unavoidable from the divisions of the priestly labour not being as yet completely arranged, Aaron, assisted by his sons, appears to have slain the victims with his own hands, as well as gone through all the prescribed ritual at the altar. 17-21.

**meat offering . . . wave offering** — It is observable that there is no notice taken of these in the offerings the priests made for themselves. They could not bear their own sins : and, therefore, instead of eating any part of their own sin offering as they were at liberty to do in the case of the people's offering, they had to carry the whole carcasses "*without* the camp and burn them with fire."

22. **Aaron lifted up his hand . . . and blessed** — The pronouncing of a benediction on the people assembled in the court was a necessary part of the high priest's duty, and the formula in which it was to be given is described (Numbers, 6. 23-27).

**came down from offering** — The altar was elevated above the level of the floor, and the ascent was by a gentle slope (Exodus, 20. 26).

23. **Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle** — Moses, according to the Divine instructions he had received, accompanied Aaron and his sons to initiate them into their sacred duties. Their previous occupations had detained them at the altar, and they now entered in company into the sacred edifice to bear the blood of the offerings within the sanctuary.

**the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people** — perhaps in a resplendent effulgence above the tabernacle as a fresh token of the Divine acceptance of that newly established seat of His worship.

24. **there came a fire out from . . . the Lord** — A flame emanating from that resplendent light that filled the holy place flashed upon the brazen altar and kindled the sacrifices. This miraculous fire — for the descent of which the people had probably been prepared — and which the priests were enjoined never to let out (ch. 6. 13), was a sign, not only of the acceptance

of the offerings and of the establishment of Aaron's authority, but of God's actual residence in that chosen dwelling place. The moment the solemn, though welcome spectacle was seen, a simultaneous shout of joy and gratitude burst from the assembled congregation, and in the attitude of profoundest reverence they worshipped "a present Deity."

## CHAPTER X.

### 1-20. NADAB AND ABIHU BURNT. I. the sons of Aaron, &c.

—If this incident occurred at the solemn period of the consecrating and dedicating the altar, these young men assumed an office which had been committed to Moses; or if it were some time after, it was an encroachment on duties which devolved on their father alone as the high priest. But the offense was of a far more aggravated nature than such a mere informality would imply. It consisted not only in their venturing unauthorized to perform the incense service, — the highest and most solemn of the priestly offices, — not only in their engaging together in a work, which was the duty only of one, but in their presuming to intrude into the holy of holies, to which access was denied to all but the high priest alone. In this respect, "they offered strange fire before the Lord;" they were guilty of a presumptuous and unwarranted intrusion into a sacred office which did not belong to them. But their offense was more aggravated still; for instead of taking the fire which was put into their censers from the brazen altar, they seem to have been content with common fire, and thus perpetrated an act, which, considering the descent of the miraculous fire they had so recently witnessed, and the solemn obligation under which they were laid to make use of that which was specially appropriated to the service of the altars, they betrayed a carelessness, an irreverence, a want of faith, most surprising and lamentable. A precedent of such evil tendency was dangerous, and it was imperatively necessary, therefore, as well for the priests themselves as for the sacred things, that a marked expression of the Divine displeasure should be given for doing that which "God commanded them not." 2. **there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them** — rather, killed them; for it appears (*v.* 5) that neither their bodies nor their robes were consumed. The expression, "from the Lord," indicates that this fire issued from the most holy place; and in the destruction of these two young priests, by the infliction of an awful judgment, the wisdom of God observed the same course, in repressing the first instance of contempt for sacred things, as he did at the commencement of the Christian dispensation (Acts, 5. 1-11). 3. **Moses said . . . This is it that the Lord spake . . . I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me** — "They that come nigh me," points, in this passage, directly to the priests; and they had received repeated and solemn warnings as to the cautious and reverent manner of their approach into the Divine presence (Exodus, 19. 22; 29. 44; ch. 8. 35). **Aaron held his peace** — The loss of two sons in so sudden and awful a manner was a calamity overwhelm-



ing to parental feelings. But the pious priest indulged in no vehement ebullition of complaint, and gave vent to no murmur of discontent, but submitted in silent resignation to what he saw was "the righteous judgment of God." 4, 5. **Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan**—The removal of the two corpses for burial without the camp would spread the painful intelligence among all the congregation. The interment of the priestly vestments along with them, was a sign of their being polluted by the sin of their irreligious wearers; and the remembrance of so appalling a judgment could not fail to strike a salutary fear into the hearts both of priests and people. 6. **uncover not your heads**—They who were ordered to carry out the two bodies, being engaged in their sacred duties, were forbidden to remove their turbans, in conformity with the usual customs of mourning; and the prohibition, "neither rend your garments," was in all probability, confined also to their official costume. For at other times, the priests wore the ordinary dress of their countrymen, and, in common with their families, might indulge their private feelings by the usual signs or expressions of grief. 8-11. **Do not drink wine nor strong drink**—This prohibition, and the accompanying admonitions, following immediately the occurrence of so fatal a catastrophe, has given rise to an opinion entertained by many, that the two unhappy priests were under the influence of intoxication when they committed the offence which was expiated only by their lives. But such an idea, though the presumption is in its favour, is nothing more than conjecture. 12-15. **Moses spake unto Aaron, &c.**—This was a timely and considerate rehearsal of the laws that regulated the conduct of the priests. Amid the distractions of their family bereavement, Aaron and his surviving sons might have forgotten or overlooked some of their duties. 16-20. **Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt**—in a sacrifice presented, as that had been, on behalf of the people, it was the duty of the priest, as typically representing them, and bearing their sins, to have eaten the flesh, after the blood had been sprinkled upon the altar. Instead of using it, however, for a sacred feast, they had burnt it without the camp; and Moses, who discovered this departure from the prescribed ritual, probably from a dread of some farther chastisements, challenged—not Aaron, whose heart was too much lacerated to bear a new cause of distress—but his two surviving sons in the priesthood for the great irregularity. Their father, however, who heard the charge, and by whose directions the error had been committed, hastened to give the explanation. The import of his apology is, that all the duty pertaining to the presentation of the offering had been duly and sacredly performed except the festive part of the observance, which privately devolved upon the priest and his family; and that this had been omitted, either because his heart was too dejected to join in the celebration of a cheerful feast, or that he supposed, from the appalling judgments that had been inflicted, the whole services of that occasion were so vitiated, that he did not complete them. Aaron was decidedly in the wrong. By the express command of God, the sin offering was to be eaten in the holy place; and no fanciful view of

expedience or propriety ought to have led him to dispense at discretion with a positive statute. The law of God was clear, and where that is the case, it is sin to deviate a hair's breadth from the path of duty. But Moses sympathized with his deeply afflicted brother; and having pointed out the error, said no more.

## CHAPTER XI.

**1-47. BEASTS THAT MAY AND MAY NOT BE EATEN. I. the Lord spake unto Moses and to Aaron**—These laws being addressed to both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers in Israel, may serve to indicate the twofold view that is to be taken of them. Undoubtedly the first and strongest reason for instituting a distinction among meats, was to discourage the Israelites from spreading into other countries, and from general intercourse with the world—to prevent them acquiring familiarity with the inhabitants of the countries bordering on Canaan, so as to fall into their idolatries, or be contaminated with their vices; in short, to keep them a distinct and peculiar people. To this purpose, no difference of creed, no system of polity, no diversity of language or manner, was so subservient as a distinction of meats founded on religion; and hence the Jews, who were taught by education to abhor many articles of food, freely partaken of by other people, never, even at periods of great degeneracy, could amalgamate with the nations amongst which they were dispersed. But although this was the principal foundation of these laws, dietetic reasons also had weight; for there is no doubt that the flesh of many of the animals here ranked as unclean, is every where, but especially in warm climates, less wholesome and adapted for food than those which are allowed to be eaten. These laws, therefore, being subservient to sanitary as well as religious ends, were addressed both to Moses and Aaron.

**3-7. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud**—Ruminating animals by the peculiar structure of their stomachs digest their food more fully than others. It is found that in the act of chewing the cud, a large portion of the poisonous properties of noxious plants eaten by them, passes off by the salivary glands. This power of secreting the poisonous effects of vegetables, is said to be particularly remarkable in cows and goats, whose mouths are often sore, and sometimes bleed, in consequence. Their flesh is, therefore, in a better state for food, as it contains more of the nutritious juices, and is more easily digested in the human stomach, and is consequently more easily assimilated. Animals which do not chew the cud, convert their food less perfectly; their flesh is, therefore, unwholesome, from the gross animal juices with which they abound, and is apt to produce scorbutic and scrofulous disorders. But the animals that may be eaten are those which “part the hoof as well as chew the cud,” and this is another means of freeing the flesh of the animal from noxious substances. “In the case of animals with parted hoofs, when feeding in unfavorable situations a prodigious amount of foetid matter is discharged, and passes off between the toes; while ani-

mals with undivided hoofs, feeding on the same ground, become severely affected in the legs, from the poisonous plants among the pasture." [WHITLAW'S *Code of Health*.] All experience attests this, and accordingly the use of ruminating animals, that is, which both chew the cud and part the hoof, has always obtained in most countries, though it was observed most carefully by the people who were favoured with the promulgation of God's law. 4. **the camel** — It does to a certain extent divide the hoof, for the foot consists of two large parts, but the division is not complete, the toes rest upon an elastic pad on which the animal goes; as a beast of burden its flesh is tough, and an additional reason for its prohibition might be to keep the Israelites apart from the descendants of Ishmael. 5. **the coney** — not the rabbit, for it is not found in Palestine or Arabia, but the Hyrax, a little animal of the size and general shape of the rabbit, but differing from it in several essential features; it has no tail, singular long hairs bristling, like thorns, among the fur on its back; its feet are bare, its nails flat and round, except those on each inner toe of the hind feet which are sharp and project like an awl. It does not burrow in the ground, but frequents the clefts of rocks. 6. **the hare** — Two species of hare must have been pointed at, the Sinai hare — the hare of the desert, small and generally brown, the other, the hare of Palestine and Syria, about the size and appearance of that known in our own country. Neither the hare nor the coney are really ruminating. They only *appear* to be so from working the jaws on the grasses they live on. They are not cloven-footed, and besides, it is said that from the great quantity of down upon them, they are very much subject to vermin, that in order to expel these, they eat poisonous plants, and if used as food while in that state, they are most deleterious. [WHITLAW.] 7. **the swine** — It is a filthy, foul-feeding animal, and it wants one of the natural provisions for purifying the system, "it cheweth not the cud;" in hot climates indulgence in swines' flesh is particularly liable to produce leprosy, scurvy, and various cutaneous eruptions. It was therefore strictly avoided by the Israelites, and its prohibition was further necessary to prevent their adopting many of the grossest idolatries practiced by neighbouring nations. 9. **These shall ye eat . . . whatsoever hath fins and scales** — "The fins and scales are the means by which the excrescences of fish are carried off, the same as in animals by perspiration. I have never known an instance of disease produced by eating such fish; but those that have no fins and scales cause, in hot climates, the most malignant disorders when eaten; in many cases they prove a mortal poison." [WHITLAW.] 12. **Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales, &c.** — Under this classification frogs, eels, shell-fish of all descriptions, were included as unclean, "many of the latter (shell-fish) enjoy a reputation they do not deserve, and have, when plentifully partaken of, produced effects which have led to a suspicion of their containing something of a poisonous nature. 13-19. **these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls** — All birds of prey are particularly ranked in the class unclean, all those which feed on flesh and carrion; no less than twenty species of birds, all probably then

known, are mentioned under this category, and the inference follows that all which are not mentioned were allowed, that is, fowls which subsist on vegetable substances. From our imperfect knowledge of the natural history of Palestine, Arabia, and the contiguous countries, it is not easy to determine exactly what some of the prohibited birds are; although they must have been all well-known among the people to whom these laws were given. **the ossifrage** — *Hebrew*, bone-breaker, rendered in the Septuagint *griffon*, supposed to be the *Gypætos barbatus*, the Lammer Geyer of the Swiss — a bird of the eagle or vulture species, inhabiting the highest mountain ranges in Western Asia as well as Europe, and pursues as its prey the chamois, ibex, or marmot, among rugged cliffs, till it drives them over a precipice — thus obtaining the name of “bone-breaker.” **the ospray** — the black eagle, among the smallest, but swiftest and strongest of its kind. **the vulture** — word so rendered in our version means more probably “the kite” or “glede,” and describes a varying but majestic flight, exactly that of the kite, which now darts forward with the rapidity of an arrow, now rests motionless on its expanded wings in the air; it feeds on small birds, insects and fish. **the kite** — the vulture. In Egypt, and perhaps in the adjoining countries also, the kite and vulture are often seen together flying in company, or busily pursuing their foul but important office of devouring the carrion and relics of putrefying flesh, which might otherwise pollute the atmosphere. **after his kind** — *i. e.*, the prohibition against eating it extended to the whole species. **the raven** — including the crow, the pie. **the owl** — It is generally supposed the ostrich is denoted by the original word. **the night hawk** — a very small bird, with which, from its nocturnal habits, many superstitious ideas were associated. **the cuckoo** — evidently some other bird is meant by the original term, from its being ranged among rapacious birds. Dr. SHAW thinks it is the salsaf; but that being a graminivorous and gregarious bird, is equally objectionable. Others think that the term the sea-mew, or some of the small sea-fowl are intended. **the hawk** — The *Hebrew* word includes every variety of the falcon family — as the gos-hawk, the jer-hawk, the sparrow-hawk, &c. Several species of hawks are found in Western Asia and Egypt, where they find inexhaustible prey in the immense numbers of pigeons and turtle-doves that abound in those quarters. The hawk was held pre-eminently sacred among the Egyptians; and this, besides its rapacious disposition and gross habits, might have been a strong reason for its prohibition as an article of food to the Israelites. **the little owl** — or horned owl, as some render it. The common barn-owl, which is well known in the East. It is the only bird of the kind here referred to, although the word is thrice mentioned in our version. **cormorant** — supposed to be the gull. **the great owl** — according to some, the Ibis of the Egyptians. It was well known to the Israelites, and so rendered by the *Septuagint* (Deuteronomy, 14. 16; Isaiah, 34. 11); according to PARKHURST, the bittern, but not determined. **the swan** — found in great numbers in all the countries of the Levant, and frequents marshy places — the vicinity of rivers and lakes. It was held sacred by

the Egyptians, and kept tame within the precincts of heathen temples. It was probably on this account chiefly its use as food was prohibited. MICHAELIS considers it the goose. **the pelican**—remarkable for the bag or pouch under its lower jaw, which serves not only as a net to catch, but also as a receptacle of food. It is solitary in its habits, and like other large aquatic birds, often flies to a great distance from its favourite haunts. **the gier eagle**—Being here associated with water fowl, it has been questioned, whether any species of eagle is referred to. Some think, as the original name *racham* denotes *tenderness, affection*, the halcyon or kingfisher is intended. [CALMET.] Others that it is the bird now called *rachami*, a kind of Egyptian vulture, abundant in the streets of Cairo, and popularly called Pharaoh's fowl. It is white in colour, in size like a raven, and feeds on carrion; it is one of the foulest and filthiest birds in the world. **the stork**—a bird of benevolent temper, and held in the highest estimation in all Eastern countries; it was declared unclean, probably, from its feeding on serpents and other venomous reptiles, as well as rearing its young on the same food. **the heron**—the word so translated only occurs in the prohibited list of food and has been variously rendered—the crane, the plover, the woodcock, the parrot. In this great diversity of opinion nothing certain can be affirmed regarding it, and as from the group with which it is classified, it must be an aquatic bird that is meant, it may as well be the heron as any other bird, the more especially as herons abound in Egypt and in the Hauran of Palestine. **the lapwing**—or hoopoe—found in warm regions, a very pretty but filthy species of bird, and was considered unclean, probably from its feeding on insects, worms and snails. **the bat**—the great or Ternat bat, known in the East, noted for its voracity and filthiness. 20. **All fowls that creep, &c.**—By “fowls” here are to be understood all creatures with wings, and by “going upon all fours,” not a restriction to animals which have exactly four feet, because many “creeping things” have more than that number. The prohibition is regarded generally as extending to insects, reptiles and worms. 21. **Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet**—Nothing short of a scientific description could convey more accurately the nature “of the locust after its kind.” They were allowed as lawful food to the Israelites, and they are eaten by the Arabs, who fry them in olive oil; or when sprinkled with salt, dried, smoked and fried, they are said to taste not unlike red herrings. 26. **every beast . . . not cloven-footed**—The prohibited animals under this description include not only the beasts which have a single hoof, as horses and asses, but that also which divided the foot into paws, as lions, tigers, &c. 29. **the weasel**—rather the mole **the mouse**—from its diminutive size is placed among the reptiles instead of the quadrupeds. **the tortoise**—a lizard, resembling very nearly in shape, and in the hard pointed scales of the tail, the *shake-tail*. 30. **the ferret**—the *Hebrew* word is thought by some to signify the newt or chameleon, by others the frog. **the chameleon**—called by the Arabs the *warrel*, a green lizard. **the snail**—a lizard which lives in the

sand, and is called by the Arabs *chulca*, of an azure colour. **the mole** — another species of lizard is meant, probably the chameleon. 31-35. **whoever doth touch them, when . . . dead, shall be unclean until the even** — These regulations must have often caused annoyance, by suddenly requiring the exclusion of the people from society, as well as the ordinances of religion. Nevertheless, they were extremely useful and salutary, especially as enforcing attention to cleanliness. This is a matter of essential importance in the East, where venomous reptiles often creep into houses, and are found lurking in boxes, vessels or holes in the wall; and the carcase of one of them, or a dead mouse, mole, lizard, or other unclean animal, might be inadvertently touched by the hand, or fall on clothes, skin-bottles, or any article of common domestic use. By connecting, therefore, the touch of such creatures with ceremonial defilement, which required immediately to be removed, an effectual means was taken to prevent the bad effects of venom and all unclean and noxious matter. 47. **make a difference between the unclean and the clean** — *i. e.*, between animals used and not used for food. It is probable that the laws contained in this chapter were not entirely new, but only gave the sanction of Divine enactment to ancient usages. Some of the prohibited animals have, on physiological grounds, been everywhere rejected by the general sense of experience of mankind, while others may have been declared unclean from their unwholesomeness in warm countries, or from some reasons, which are now imperfectly known, connected with contemporary idolatry.

## CHAPTER XII.

**1-8. WOMAN'S UNCLEANNESS BY CHILD-BIRTH.** 2. **If a woman, &c.** — The mother of a boy was ceremonially unclean for a week, at the end of which the child was circumcised (Genesis, 17. 12; Romans, 4. 11-13); the mother of a girl for two weeks — a stigma on the sex (1 Timothy, 2. 14, 15) for sin, which was removed by Christ; every one who came near her during that time contracted a similar defilement. After these periods, visitors might approach her, though she was still excluded from the public ordinances of religion. 6-8. **the days of her purifying** — Though the occasion was of a festive character, yet the sacrifices appointed were not a peace offering but a burnt offering and sin offering, in order to impress the mind of the parent with recollections of the origin of sin, and that the child inherited a fallen and sinful nature. The offerings were to be presented the day after the period of her separation had ended — *i. e.*, forty-first for a boy, eighty-first for a girl. **bring two turtles, &c.** — (See ch. 5. 7.) This was the offering made by Mary, the mother of Jesus, and it affords an incontestable proof of the poor and humble condition of the family (Luke, 2. 22-24).

## CHAPTER XIII.

**1-59. THE LAWS AND TOKENS IN DISCERNING LEPROSY. 2.**  
**When a man shall have in the skin, &c.**—The fact of the following rules for distinguishing the plague of leprosy being incorporated with the Hebrew code of laws, proves the existence of the odious disease among that people. But a short time, little more than a year, if so long a period had elapsed since the exodus, when symptoms of leprosy seem extensively to have appeared among them; and as they could not be very liable to such a cutaneous disorder among their active journeyings, and in the dry, open air of Arabia, the seeds of the disorder must have been laid in Egypt, where it has always been endemic. There is every reason to believe that this was the case; that the leprosy was not a family complaint, hereditary among the Hebrews, but that they got it from intercourse with the Egyptians, and from the unfavourable circumstances of their condition in the house of bondage. The great excitement and irritability of the skin in the hot and sandy regions of the East, produce a far greater predisposition to leprosy of all kinds than in the cooler temperature of Europe; and cracks and blotches, inflammations or even contusions of the skin, very often lead to these in Arabia and Palestine to some extent, but particularly in Egypt. Besides, the subjugated and distressed state of the Hebrews, in the latter country, and the nature of their employment must have rendered them very liable to this as well as to various other blemishes and misaffections of the skin; in the production of which there are no causes more active or powerful than a depressed state of body and mind, hard labour under a burning sun, the body constantly covered with the excoriating dust of brickfields, and an impoverished diet—to all of which the Israelites were exposed while under the Egyptian bondage. It appears that, in consequence of these hardships, there was, even after they had left Egypt, a general predisposition among the Hebrews to the contagious forms of leprosy—so that it often occurred as a consequence of various other affections of the skin. And hence all cutaneous blemishes or blaines—especially such as had a tendency to terminate in leprosy—were watched with a jealous eye from the first. [GOOD'S *Study of Medicine.*] A swelling, a pimple, or bright spot on the skin, created a strong ground of suspicion of a man's being attacked by the dreaded disease.  
**then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, &c.**—Like the Egyptian priests, the Levites united the character of physician with that of the sacred office; and on the appearance of any suspicious eruptions on the skin, the person having these was brought before the priest—not, however, to receive medical treatment, though it is not improbable that some purifying remedies might be prescribed, but to be examined with a view to those sanitary precautions which it belonged to legislation to adopt. 3-6. **the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh, &c.**—The leprosy, as covering the person with a white scaly scurf, has always been accounted an offensive blemish rather than a serious

malady in the East, unless when it assumed its less common and malignant forms. When a Hebrew priest, after a careful inspection, discovered under the cutaneous blemish the distinctive signs of contagious leprosy, the person was immediately pronounced unclean, and is supposed to have been sent out of the camp to a lazaretto provided for that purpose. If the symptoms appeared to be doubtful, he ordered the person to be kept in domestic confinement for seven days, when he was subjected to a second examination; and if during the previous week the eruption had subsided or appeared to be harmless, he was instantly discharged. But if the eruption continued unabated and still doubtful, he was put under surveillance for another week, at the end of which the character of the disorder never failed to manifest itself, and he was either doomed to perpetual exclusion from society, or allowed to go at large. A person who had thus been detained on suspicion, when at length set at liberty, was obliged to "wash his clothes," as having been tainted by ceremonial pollution: and the purification through which he was required to go was, in the spirit of the Mosaic dispensation, symbolical of that inward purity it was instituted to promote. 7, 8. **But if the scab spread much-abroad in the skin**—Those doubtful cases, when they assumed a malignant character, appeared in one of two forms, apparently according to the particular constitution of the skin or of the habit generally. The one was "somewhat dark"—*i. e.*, the obscure or dusky leprosy, in which the natural colour of the hair, which in Egypt and Palestine is black, is not changed, as is repeatedly said in the sacred code, nor is there any depression in the dusky spot, while the patches, instead of keeping stationary to their first size, are perpetually enlarging their boundary. The patient labouring under this form was pronounced unclean by the Hebrew priest or physician, and hereby sentenced to a separation from his family and friends—a decisive proof of its being contagious. 9-37. **if the rising be white**—This BRIGHT WHITE leprosy is the most malignant and inveterate of all the varieties the disease exhibits, and it was marked by the following distinctive signs: A glossy white and spreading scale, upon an elevated base, the elevation depressed in the middle, but without a change of colour; the black hair on the patches participating in the whiteness, and the scaly patches themselves perpetually enlarging their boundary. Several of these characters, taken separately, belong to other blemishes of the skin as well; so that none of them was to be taken alone, and it was only when the whole of them concurred that the Jewish priest, in his capacity of physician, was to pronounce the disease a malignant leprosy. If it spread over the entire frame without producing any ulceration, it lost its contagious power by degrees; or, in other words, ran through its course and exhausted itself. In that case, there being no longer any fear of further evil either to the individual himself or to the community, the patient was declared clean by the priest, while the dry scales were yet upon him, and restored to society. If, on the contrary, the patches ulcerated, and quick or fungous flesh sprung up in them, the purulent matter, of which, if brought into contact with the skin of other persons, would be taken into the constitu-



tion by means of absorbent vessels, the priest was at once to pronounce it an inveterate leprosy; a temporary confinement was declared to be totally unnecessary and he was regarded as unclean for life. [DR. GOOD.] Other skin affections, which had a tendency to terminate in leprosy, though they were not decided symptoms when alone, were (*v.* 18-23) "a boil" and (*v.* 24-28) "a hot burning," *i. e.*, a fiery inflammation or carbuncle, and (*v.* 29-37) "a dry scall," when the leprosy was distinguished by being in sight deeper than the skin; and the hair became thin and yellow.

38, 39. **If a man . . . or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots**—This modification of the leprosy is distinguished by a dull, white colour, and it is entirely a cutaneous disorder, never injuring the constitution. It is described as not penetrating below the skin of the flesh and as not rendering necessary an exclusion from society. It is evident, then, this common form of leprosy is not contagious, otherwise Moses would have prescribed as strict a quarantine in this as in the other cases. And, hereby, we see the great superiority of the Mosaic law, which so accurately distinguished the characters of the leprosy and preserved to society the services of those who were labouring under the uncontagious forms of the disease, over the customs and regulations of Eastern countries in the present day, where all lepers are indiscriminately proscribed and are avoided as unfit for free intercourse with their fellow-men.

40, 41. **bald . . . forehead bald**—The falling off of the hair is another symptom which creates a suspicion of leprosy, when the baldness commences in the back part of the head. But it was not of itself a decisive sign, unless when taken in connection with other tokens; a "sore of a reddish white colour;" and the Hebrews, as well as other Orientals, were accustomed to distinguish between the forehead baldness, which might be natural, and that baldness which might be the consequence of disease.

45. **the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, &c.**—The person who was declared affected with the leprosy forthwith exhibited all the tokens of suffering from a heavy calamity. Renting garments and uncovering the head were common signs of mourning. As to "the putting a covering upon the upper lip," that means either wearing a moustache, as the Hebrews used to shave the upper lip [CALMET], or simply keeping a hand over it. All these external marks of grief were intended to proclaim, in addition to his own exclamation, "unclean!" that the person was a leper whose company every one must shun.

46. **he shall dwell alone; without the camp**—in a lazaretto by himself or associated with other lepers (2 Kings, 7. 3, 8).

47-59. **The garment . . . that the . . . leprosy is in**—It is well known that infectious diseases, such as scarlet fever, measles, the plague, are latently imbibed and carried by the clothes. But the language of this passage clearly indicates a disease to which clothes themselves were subject, and which was followed by effects on them analogous to those which malignant leprosy produces on the human body, for similar regulations were made for the rigid inspection of suspected garments by a priest as for the examination of a leprous person. It has long been conjectured, and recently ascertained by the use of a lens, that the

leprous condition of swine is produced by myriads of minute insects engendered in their skin ; and, regarding all leprosy as of the same nature, it is thought that this affords a sufficient reason for the injunction in the Mosaic law to destroy the clothes in which the disease, after careful observation, seemed to manifest itself. Clothes are sometimes seen contaminated by this disease in the West Indies and the southern parts of America [WHITLAW'S *Code of Health*], and it may be presumed that as the Hebrews were living in the desert, where they had not the convenience of frequent changes and washing, the clothes they wore and the skin mats on which they lay, would be apt to breed infectious vermin, which, being settled in the stuff, would imperceptibly gnaw it and leave stains similar to those described by Moses. It is well known that the wool of sheep dying of disease, if it had not been shorn from the animal while living, and also skins, if not thoroughly prepared by scouring, are liable to the effects described in this passage. The stains are described as of a greenish or reddish colour, according, perhaps, to the colour or nature of the ingredients used in preparing them ; for acids convert blue vegetable colours into red, and alkalies change then into green. [BROWN.] It appears, then, that the leprosy, though sometimes inflicted as a miraculous judgment (Numbers, 12. 10 ; 2 Kings, 5. 27), was a natural disease which is known in Eastern countries still ; while the rules prescribed by the Hebrew legislator for distinguishing the true character and varieties of the disease, and which are far superior to the method of treatment now followed in those regions, show the Divine wisdom by which he was guided. Doubtless, the origin of the disease is owing to some latent causes in nature ; and, perhaps, a more extended acquaintance with the archæology of Egypt, and the natural history of the adjacent countries, may confirm the opinion that the leprosy results from noxious insects or a putrid fermentation. But whatever the origin or cause of the disease, the laws enacted by Divine authority regarding it, while they pointed, in the first instance, to sanitary ends, were at the same time intended, by stimulating to carefulness against ceremonial defilement, to foster a spirit of religious fear and inward purity.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## 1-57. THE RITES AND SACRIFICES IN CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

2. **law of the leper in the day of his cleansing** — Though quite convalescent a leper was not allowed to return to society immediately and at his own will. The malignant character of his disease rendered the greatest precautions necessary to his re-admission among the people. One of the priests most skilled in the diagnostics of disease [GROTIUS,] being deputed to attend such outcasts, the restored leper appeared before this official, and when after an examination a certificate of health was given, the ceremonies here described were forthwith observed outside the camp. 4. **two birds** — *lit.*, sparrows. The *Septuagint*, however, renders the expression "little birds ;" and it is evident that it is to be taken

in this generic sense from their being specified as "clean," a condition which would have been altogether superfluous to mention in reference to sparrows. In all the offerings prescribed in the law Moses ordered only common and accessible birds; and, hence, we may presume that he points here to such birds as sparrows or pigeons, as in the desert it might have been very difficult to procure wild birds alive. **cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop**—The cedar here meant was certainly not the famous tree of Lebanon, and it is generally supposed to have been the juniper, as several varieties of that shrub are found growing abundantly in the clefts and crevices of the Sinaitic mountains. A stick of this shrub was bound to a bunch of hyssop by a scarlet ribbon, and the living bird was to be so attached to it, that when they dipped the branches in the water the tail of the bird might also be moistened, but not the head nor the wings, that it might not be impeded in its flight when let loose. **5. the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed . . . over running water**—As the blood of a single bird would not have been sufficient to immerse the body of another bird, it was mingled with spring water to increase the quantity necessary for the appointed sprinklings, which were to be repeated *seven times*, denoting a complete purification. (See 2 Kings, 5. 10; Psalm 51. 2; Matthew, 8. 4; Luke, 5. 14.) The living bird being then set free, in token of the leper's release from quarantine, the priest pronounced him clean; and this official declaration was made with all solemnity, in order both that the mind of the leper might be duly impressed with a sense of the Divine goodness and that others might be satisfied they might safely hold intercourse with him. Several other purifications had to be gone through during a series of seven days, and the whole process had to be repeated on the seventh ere he was allowed to re-enter the camp. The circumstance of a priest being employed seems to imply that instructions suitable to the newly recovered leper would be given and that the symbolical ceremonies used in the process of cleansing leprosy would be explained. How far they were then understood we cannot tell. But we can trace some instructive analogies between the leprosy and the disease of sin, and between the rites observed in the process of cleansing leprosy and the provisions of the gospel. The chief of these analogies are, that as it was only when a leper exhibited a certain change of state that orders were given by the priest for a sacrifice, so a sinner must be in the exercise of faith and penitence ere the benefits of the gospel remedy can be enjoyed by him. The slain bird and the bird let loose are supposed to typify, the one the death and the other the resurrection of Christ; while the sprinklings on him that had been leprosy typified the requirements which led a believer to cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit and to perfect his holiness in the fear of the Lord. **10-20. On the eighth day he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish**—The purification of the leper was not completed till at the end of seven days, after the ceremonial of the birds, and during which, though permitted to come into the camp, he had to tarry abroad

out of his tent, from which he came daily to appear at the door of the tabernacle with the offerings required. He was presented before the Lord by the priest that made him clean. And hence it has always been reckoned among pious people the first duty of a patient newly restored from a long and dangerous sickness to repair to the church to offer his thanksgiving, where his body and soul, in order to be an acceptable offering, must be presented by our great Priest whose blood alone makes any clean. The offering was to consist of three lambs, three-tenth deals or decimal parts of an ephah of fine flour, two pints, one-tenth and one log, half-pint of oil (ch. 2. 1). One of the lambs was for a trespass offering, which was necessary from the inherent sin of his nature or from his defilement of the camp by his leprosy previous to his expulsion; and it is remarkable that the blood of the trespass offering was applied exactly in the same particular manner to the extremities of the restored leper as that of the ram in the consecration of the priests. The parts sprinkled with this blood were then anointed with oil, a ceremony which is supposed to have borne this spiritual import; that while the blood was a token of forgiveness, the oil was an emblem of healing, as the blood of Christ justifies, the influence of the Spirit sanctifies. Of the other two lambs the one was to be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering, which had, also, the character of a thank offering for God's mercy in his restoration. And this was considered to make atonement "for him;" *i. e.*, it removed that ceremonial pollution which had excluded him from the enjoyment of religious ordinances, just as the atonement of Christ restores all who are cleansed through faith in His sacrifice to the privileges of the children of God. 21-32. **if he be poor and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb** — a kind and considerate provision for an extension of the privilege to lepers of the poorer class. The blood of their smaller offering was to be applied in the same process of purification, and they were as publicly and completely cleansed as those who brought a costlier offering (Acts, 10. 34). 34-48. **leprosy in a house** — This law was prospective, not being to come into operation till the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan. The words, "I put the leprosy," has led many to think that this plague was a judicial infliction from heaven for the sins of the owner; while others do not regard it in this light, it being common in Scripture to represent God as doing that which He only permits in His providence to be done. Assuming it to have been a natural disease, a new difficulty arises as to whether we are to consider that the house had become infected by the contagion of leprosy occupiers; or that the leprosy was in the house itself. It is evident that the latter was the true state of the case from the furniture being removed out of it on the first suspicion of disease on the walls. Some have supposed that the name of leprosy was analogically applied to it by the Hebrews, as we speak of cancer in trees, when they exhibit corrosive effects similar to what the disease so named produces on the human body; while others have pronounced it a mural efflorescence or species of mil-dew on the wall, apt to be produced in very damp situations, and which was

followed by effects so injurious to health, as well as to the stability of a house, particularly in warm countries, as to demand the attention of a legislator. Moses enjoined the priests to follow the same course and during the same period of time for ascertaining the true character of this disease as in human leprosy, in case of being found leprous, to remove the infected parts, or, if afterward there appeared a risk of the contagion spreading, to destroy the house altogether and remove the materials to a distance. The stones were probably rough, unhewn stones, built up without cement in the manner now frequently used in fences, and plastered over or else laid in mortar. The oldest examples of architecture are of this character. The very same thing has to be done still with houses infected with mural salt. The stones covered with the nitrous incrustation must be removed, and if the infected wall is suffered to remain, it must be plastered all over anew. 48-57. **the priest shall pronounce the house clean because the plague is healed**—The precautions here described show that there is great danger in warm countries from the house leprosy, which was likely to be increased by the smallness and rude architecture of the houses in the early ages of the Israelitish history. As a house could not contract any impurity in the sight of God, the "atone-ment" which the priest was to make for it must either have a reference to the sins of its occupiers or to the ceremonial process appointed for its purification, the very same as that observed for a leprous person. This solemn declaration that it was "clean," as well as the offering made on the occasion, were admirably calculated to make known the fact, to remove apprehension from the public mind as well as relieve the owner from the aching suspicion of dwelling in an infected house.

## CHAPTER XV.

**1-18. UNCLEANNESS OF MEN. — 2. When any man hath a running issue**—This chapter describes other forms of uncleanness, the nature of which is sufficiently intelligible in the text without any explanatory comment. Being the effects of licentiousness, they properly come within the notice of the legislator, and the very stringent rules here prescribed, both for the separation of the person diseased and for avoiding contamination from any thing connected with him, were well calculated not only to prevent contagion but to discourage the excesses of licentious indulgence. **9. what saddle . . . he rideth upon that hath the issue shall be unclean**—(See Genesis, 31. 34.) **12. the vessel of earth that he toucheth which hath the issue shall be broken**—It is thought the pottery of the Israelites, like the earthenware jars in which the Egyptians kept their water, was unglazed, and consequently porous, and that it was its porousness which, rendering it extremely liable to imbibe small particles of impure water, was the reason of the vessel touched by an unclean person being ordered to be broken. **13, 14. then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing**—Like a leprous person he under-

went a week's probation, whether he was completely healed, and then with the sacrifices prescribed the priest made an atonement for him, *i. e.*, offered the oblations necessary for the removal of his ceremonial defilements, as well as the typical pardon of his sins.

**19-33. UNCLEANNESS OF WOMEN.** 19. **if a woman have an issue**— Though this, like the leprosy, might be a natural affection, it was anciently considered contagious, and entailed a ceremonial defilement which typified a moral impurity. This ceremonial defilement had to be removed by an appointed method of ceremonial expiation, and the neglect of it subjected any one to the guilt of defiling the tabernacle; and to death as the penalty of profane temerity. 31-33. **Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness**— The Divine wisdom was manifested in inspiring the Israelites with a profound reverence for holy things; and nothing was more suited to this purpose than to debar from the tabernacle all who were polluted by any kind of uncleanness, ceremonial as well as natural, mental as well as physical. The better to mark out that people as his family, his servants and priests, dwelling in the camp as in a holy place, consecrated by His presence and His tabernacle, He required of them complete purity, and did not allow them to come before Him when defiled, even by involuntary or secret impurities, as a want of respect due to His majesty. And when we bear in mind that God was training up a people to live in His presence in some measure as priests devoted to His service, we shall not consider these rules for the maintenance of personal purity either too stringent or too minute (1 Thessalonians, 4. 4).

## CHAPTER XVI.

**1-34. HOW THE HIGH PRIEST MUST ENTER INTO THE HOLY PLACE.** 1. **after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died**— It is thought by some that this chapter has been transposed out of its right place in the sacred record, which was immediately after the narrative of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu. That appalling catastrophe must have filled Aaron with painful apprehensions, lest the guilt of these two sons might be entailed on his house, or that other members of his family might share the same fate by some irregularities or defects in the discharge of their sacred functions. And, therefore, this law was established, by the due observance of whose requirements the Aaronic order would be securely maintained and accepted in the priesthood. 2. **Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil, &c.**— Common priests went every day to burn incense on the golden altar into the part of the sanctuary *without* the veil. But none except the high priest was allowed to enter *within* the veil, and that only once a year with the greatest care and solemnity. This arrangement was evidently designed to inspire a reverence for the most holy place, and the precaution was necessary, at a time when the presence of God was indicated by sensible symbols, the impres-

sion of which might have been diminished or lost by daily and familiar observation. **I will appear in the cloud** — *i. e.*, the smoke of the incense which the high priest burnt on his yearly entrance into the most holy place: and this was the cloud which at that time covered the mercyseat. 3, 4. **Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place** — As the duties of the great day of atonement led to the nearest and most solemn approach to God, the directions as to the proper course to be followed were minute and special. **with a young bullock . . . and a ram** — These victims he brought alive, but they were not offered in sacrifice till he had gone through the ceremonies described between this and the eleventh verse. He was not to attire himself on that occasion in the splendid robes that were proper to his sacred office, but in a plain dress of linen, like the common Levites — for, as he was then to make atonement for his own sins, as well as for those of the people, he was to appear in the humble character of a suppliant. That plain dress was more in harmony with a season of humiliation, as well as lighter and more convenient for the duties which on that occasion he had singly to perform, than the gorgeous robes of the pontificate. It showed that when all appeared as sinners, the highest and lowest were then on a level, and that there is no distinction of persons with God. 5-10. **shall take of the congregation . . . two kids of the goats . . . and one ram** — The sacrifices were to be offered by the high priest respectively for himself and the other priests, as well as for the people. The bullock (*v.* 3) and the goats were for sin offerings, and the rams for burnt offerings. The goats, though used in different ways, constituted only one offering. They were both presented before the Lord, and the disposal of them determined by lot, which Jewish writers have thus described: The priest, placing one of the goats on his right hand, and the other on his left, took his station by the altar, and cast into an urn two pieces of gold exactly similar, inscribed, the one with the words “for the Lord,” and the other for “Azazel” (the scape-goat). After having well shaken them together, he put both his hands into the box and took up a lot in each: that in his right hand he put on the head of the goat which stood on his right, and that in his left he dropt on the other. In this manner the fate of each was decided. 11-14. **Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself, &c.** — The first part of the service was designed to solemnize his own mind, as well as the minds of the people, by offering the sacrifices for their sins. The sin offerings being slain had the sins of the offerer judicially transferred to them by the imputation of his hands on their head (*ch.* 4), and thus the young bullock, which was to make atonement for himself and the other priests (called his house, Psalm 135. 19), was killed by the hands of the high priest. While the blood of the victim was being received into a vessel, taking a censer of live coals in his right had, and a platter of sweet incense in his left, he, amid the solemn attention and the anxious prayers of the assembled multitude, crossed the porch and the holy place, opened the outer veil which led into the holy of holies, then the inner veil, and, standing before the ark, deposited the censer of coals

on the floor, emptied the plate of incense into his hand, poured it on the burning coals, and the apartment was filled with fragrant smoke, intended, according to Jewish writers, to prevent any presumptuous gazer prying too curiously into the form of the mercy-seat, which was the Lord's throne. The high priest having done this, perfumed the sanctuary, returned to the door, took the blood of the slain bullock, and carrying it into the holy of holies, sprinkled it with his finger once upon the mercy-seat "eastward," *i. e.*, on the side next to himself; and seven times "before the mercy-seat," *i. e.*, on the front of the ark. Leaving the coals and the incense burning, he went out a second time, to sacrifice at the altar of burnt offering the goat which had been assigned as a sin offering for the people; and carrying its blood into the holy of holies, made similar sprinklings as he had done before with the blood of the bullock. While the high priest was thus engaged in the most holy place, none of the ordinary priests were allowed to remain within the precincts of the tabernacle. The sanctuary or holy place, and the altar of burnt offering were in like manner sprinkled seven times with the blood of the bullock and the goat. The object of this solemn ceremonial was to impress the minds of the Israelites with the conviction that the whole tabernacle was stained by the sins of a guilty people, that by their sins they had forfeited the privileges of the Divine presence and worship, and that an atonement had to be made as the condition of God's remaining with them. The sins and shortcomings of the past year having polluted the sacred edifice, the expiation required to be annually renewed. The exclusion of the priests indicated their unworthiness, and the impurities of their service. The mingled blood of the two victims being sprinkled on the horns of the altar indicated that the priests and the people equally needed an atonement for their sins. But the sanctuary being thus ceremonially purified, and the people of Israel reconciled by the blood of the consecrated victim, the Lord continued to dwell in the midst of them, and honour them with His gracious presence. 20-22. **he shall bring the live goat**—Having already been presented before the Lord (*v.* 10), it was now brought forward to the high priest, who, placing his hands upon its head, and "having confessed over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins," transferred them by this act to the goat as their substitute. It was then delivered into the hands of a person, who was appointed to lead him away into a distant, solitary and desert place, where in early times he was let go, to escape for his life, but in the time of Christ was carried to a high rock twelve miles from Jerusalem, and there, being thrust over the precipice, he was killed. Commentators have differed widely in their opinions about the character and purpose of this part of the ceremonial; some considering the word Azazel, with the LXX, and our translators, to mean "the scapegoat;" others, "a lofty, precipitous rock" [BOCHART]; others, "a thing separated to God" [EWALD, THOLUCK]; while others think it designates Satan [GENSENIUS, HENGSTENBERG]. This last view is grounded on the idea of both goats forming one and the same sacrifice of atonement,



and it is supported by Zechariah, 3, which presents a striking commentary on this passage. Whether there was in this peculiar ceremony any reference to an Egyptian superstition about Typhon, the spirit of evil, inhabiting the wilderness, and the design was to ridicule it by sending a cursed animal into his gloomy dominions, it is impossible to say. The subject is involved in much obscurity. But in any view there seems to be a typical reference to Christ who bore away our sins. 23-28. **Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments**—On the dismissal of the scape-goat, the high priest prepared for the important parts of the service which still remained; and for the performance of these he laid aside his plain linen clothes, and having bathed himself in water, he assumed his pontifical dress. Thus gorgeously attired, he went to present the burnt offerings which were prescribed for himself and the people, consisting of the two rams which had been brought with the sin offerings, but reserved till now. The fat was ordered to be burnt upon the altar; the rest of the carcasses to be cut down and given to some priestly attendants to burn without the camp, in conformity with the general law for the sin offerings (ch. 4. 8-23; 8. 14-17). The persons employed in burning them, as well as the conductor of the scape-goat, were obliged to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh in water before they were allowed to return into the camp. 29-34. **this shall be a statute forever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls**—This day of annual expiation for all the sins, irreverences and impurities of all classes in Israel during the previous year, was to be observed as a solemn fast, in which “they were to afflict their souls;” it was reckoned a sabbath—kept as a season of “holy convocation,” or assembling for religious purposes, and the persons who performed any labour were subject to the penalty of death. It took place on the tenth day of the seventh month, corresponding to our third of October, and this chapter, together with ch. 23. 27-32, as containing special allusion to the observances of the day, were publicly read. The rehearsal of these passages appointing the solemn ceremonial was very appropriate, and the details of the successive parts of it—above all the spectacle of the public departure of the scape-goat under the care of its leader, must have produced salutary impressions both of sin and of duty that would not be soon effaced.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**1-16. BLOOD OF BEASTS MUST BE OFFERED AT THE TABERNACLE DOOR.** 3. **What man . . . killeth an ox**—The Israelites, like other people living in the desert, would not make much use of animal food, and when they did kill a lamb or a kid for food, it would almost always be, as in Abraham’s entertainment of the angels, on occasion of a feast, to be eaten in company. This was what was done with the peace offerings, and accordingly it is here enacted, that the same course shall be followed in slaughtering the animals

as in the case of those offerings, *viz.*, that they should be killed publicly, and after being devoted to God, partaken of by the offerers. This law, it is obvious, could only be observable in the wilderness, while the people were encamped within an accessible distance from the tabernacle. The reason of it is to be found in the strong addictedness of the Israelites to idolatry at the time of their departure from Egypt; and as it would have been easy for any by killing an animal, to sacrifice privately to a favorite object of worship, a strict prohibition was made against their slaughtering at home. (See Deuteronomy, 12. 13.) 5. **To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field** — “They” is supposed by some commentators to refer to the Egyptians, so that the verse will stand thus: “the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they (the Egyptians) offer in the open field.” The law is thought to have been directed against numbers whose Egyptian habits led them to imitate this idolatrous practice. 7. **they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils** — *lit.*, “goats.” The prohibition evidently alludes to the worship of the hirei-footed kind such as Pan, Faunus and Saturn, whose recognized symbol was a goat. This was a form of idolatry enthusiastically practiced by the Egyptians, particularly in the nome or province of Mendes. Pan was supposed especially to preside over mountainous and desert regions, and it was while they were in the wilderness the Israelites seem to have been powerfully influenced by a feeling to propitiate this idol. Moreover, the ceremonies observed in this idolatrous worship were extremely licentious and obscene, and the gross impurity of the rites gives great point and significance to the expression of Moses, “they have gone a whoring.” 8, 9. **Whatsoever man . . . offereth . . . and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle** — Before the promulgation of the law, men worshipped wherever they pleased or pitched their tents. But after that event the rites of religion could be acceptably performed only at the appointed place of worship. The restriction with respect to place was necessary as a preventive of idolatry; for it prohibited the Israelites, when at a distance, from repairing to the altars of the heathen, which were commonly in groves or fields. 10. **I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people** — The face of God is often used in Scripture to denote his anger (Psalm 34. 16; Revelation, 6. 16; Ezekiel, 38. 18), and the manner in which God’s face would be set against such an offender, was, that if the crime were public and known, he was condemned to death; if it were secret, vengeance would overtake him. (See Genesis, 9. 4.) But the practice against which the law is here pointed was an idolatrous rite. The Zabians, or worshippers of the heavenly host, were accustomed, in sacrificing animals, to pour out the blood, and eat a part of the flesh at *the place* where the blood was poured out, and sometimes the blood itself, believing that by means of it, friendship, brotherhood and familiarity, were contracted between the worshippers and the deities. They, moreover, supposed that the blood was very beneficial in obtaining from them a vision of the demon

during their sleep, and a revelation of future events. The prohibition against eating blood, viewed in the light of this historic commentary, and unconnected with the peculiar terms in which it is expressed, seems to have been leveled against idolatrous practices, as is still farther evident from Ezekiel, 33. 25, 26 ; 1 Corinthians, 10. 20, 21. **II. the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls**—God, as the sovereign author and proprietor of nature, reserved the blood to himself, and allowed men only one use of it—in the way of sacrifices. 13, 14. **whatsoever man . . . hunteth**—It was customary with heathen sportsmen, when they killed any game or venison, to pour out the blood as a libation to the god of the chase. The Israelites, on the contrary, were enjoined, instead of leaving it exposed, to cover it with dust, and, by this means, were effectually debarred from all the superstitious uses to which the heathen applied it. 15, 16. **every soul that eateth that which dieth of itself**—(Exodus, 22. 31 ; ch. 11. 39 ; Acts, 15. 20.) **be unclean until the even**—*i. e.*, from the moment of his discovering his fault until the evening. This law, however, was binding only on an Israelite. (See Deuteronomy, 14. 21.)

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**1-30. UNLAWFUL MARRIAGES. 2-4. I am the Lord your God—**

This renewed mention of the Divine sovereignty over the Israelites was intended to bear particularly on some laws that were widely different from the social customs that obtained both in Egypt and Canaan ; for the enormities which the laws enumerated in this chapter were intended to put down, were freely practiced or publicly sanctioned in both of those countries ; and, indeed, the extermination of the ancient Canaanites is described as owing to the abominations with which they had polluted the land. **Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments ; which if a man do, he shall live in them**—A special blessing was promised to the Israelites on condition of their obedience to the Divine law ; and this promise was remarkably verified at particular eras of their history, when pure and undefiled religion prevailed among them, in the public prosperity and domestic happiness enjoyed by them as a people. Obedience to the Divine law always, indeed, ensures temporal advantages ; and this, doubtless, was the primary meaning of the words, “ which if a man do, he shall live in them.” But that they had a higher reference to spiritual life is evident from the application made of them by our Lord (Luke, 10. 28) and the apostle (Romans, 10. 5). **None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin**—Very great laxity prevailed among the Egyptians in their sentiments and practice about the conjugal relation, as they not only openly sanctioned marriage between brothers and sisters, but even between parents and children. Such incestuous alliances Moses wisely prohibited, and his laws form the basis on which the marriage regulations of this and other Christian nations are chiefly founded. This verse contains a general summary of all

the particular prohibitions; and the forbidden intercourse is pointed out by the phrase, "to approach to." In the specified prohibitions that follow, and all of which are included in this general summary, the prohibited familiarity is indicated by the phrases, to "uncover the nakedness," to "take" and to "lie with." The phrase in this 6th verse, therefore, has the same identical meaning with each of the other three, and the marriages in reference to which it is used are those of consanguinity or too close affinity, amounting to incestuous connections. 18. **Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her.** — The original is rendered in the margin, "neither shalt thou take one wife to another to vex her," and two different and opposite interpretations have been put upon this passage. The marginal construction involves an express prohibition of polygamy; and, indeed, there can be no doubt that the practice of having more wives than one is directly contrary to the Divine will. It was prohibited by the original law of marriage, and no evidence of its lawfulness under the Levitical code can be discovered, although Moses — from "the hardness of their hearts" — tolerated it to the people of a rude and early age. The second interpretation forms the ground on which the "vexed question" has been raised in our times respecting the lawfulness of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Whatever arguments may be used to prove the unlawfulness or inexpediency of such a matrimonial relation, the passage under consideration cannot, on a sound basis of criticism, be enlisted in the service; for the crimes with which it is here associated warrant the conclusion, that it points not to marriage with a deceased wife's sister, but with a sister in the wife's lifetime — a practice common among the ancient Egyptians, Chaldeans and others. 21. **thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, &c.** — Molech, or Moloch, which signifies "king," was the idol of the Ammonites. His statue was of brass, and rested on a pedestal or throne of the same metal. His head, resembling that of a calf, was adorned with a crown, and his arms were extended in the attitude of embracing those who approached him. His devotees dedicated their children to him; and when this was to be done, they heated the statue to a high pitch of intensity by a fire within; and then the infants were either shaken over the flames or passed through the ignited arms, by way of lustration to insure the favour of the pretended deity. The fire-worshippers asserted, that all children who did not undergo this purifying process would die in infancy; and the influence of this Zabian superstition was still so extensively prevalent in the days of Moses, that the Divine law-giver judged it necessary to prohibit it by an express statute. **neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God** — by giving it to false or pretended divinities; or, perhaps, from this precept standing in close connection with the worship of Molech, the meaning rather is, Do not, by devoting your children to him, give foreigners occasion to blaspheme the name of your God as a cruel and sanguinary deity, who demands the sacrifice of human victims, and who encourages cruelty in his votaries. 24. **Defile not yourselves in any of these things** — In the preceding verses seventeen express cases of incest are enu-

merated ; comprehending eleven of affinity and six of consanguinity, together with some criminal enormities of an aggravated and unnatural character. In such prohibitions it was necessary for the instruction of a people low in the scale of moral perception, that the enumeration should be very specific as well as minute ; and then, on completing it, the Divine law-giver announces his own views of these crimes, without any exception or modification in the remarkable terms employed in this verse. **in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you, &c.** — Ancient history gives many appalling proofs that the erroneous vices described in this chapter were very prevalent, nay, were regularly practiced from religious motives in the temples of Egypt and the groves of Canaan ; and it was these gigantic social disorders that occasioned the expulsion, of which the Israelites were, in the hands of a righteous and retributive providence, the appointed instruments (Genesis, 15. 16). The strongly figurative language of “the land itself vomiting out her inhabitants,” shows the hopeless depth of their moral corruption. 25. **Therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it; and the land itself vomiteth out its inhabitants** — The Canaanites, as enormous and incorrigible sinners, were to be exterminated ; and this extermination was manifestly a judicial punishment, inflicted by a ruler whose laws had been grossly and perseveringly outraged. But before a law can be disobeyed it must have been previously in existence ; and hence a law, prohibiting all the horrid crimes enumerated above, a law obligatory upon the Canaanites as well as other nations, was already known and in force before the Levitical law of incest was promulgated. Some general law, then, prohibiting these crimes, must have been published to mankind at a very early period of the world’s history ; and that law must either have been the moral law, originally written on the human heart, or a law on the institution of marriage revealed to Adam, and known to the Canaanites and others by tradition or otherwise. 28. **the souls that commit them shall be cut off** — This strong denunciatory language is applied to all the crimes specified in the chapter without distinction ; to incest as truly as to bestiality, and to the eleven cases of affinity as fully as to the six of consanguinity. Death is the punishment sternly denounced against all of them. No language could be more explicit or universal ; none could more strongly indicate intense loathing and abhorrence. 30. **Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs** — In giving the Israelites these particular institutions, God was only redelivering the law imprinted on the natural heart of man ; for there is every reason to believe that the incestuous alliances and unnatural crimes prohibited in this chapter were forbidden to all men by a law expressed or understood from the beginning of the world, or, at least, from the era of the flood ; since God threatens to condemn and punish, in a manner so sternly severe, these atrocities in the practice of the Canaanites and their neighbours, who were not subject to the laws of the Hebrew nation.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1-37. A REPETITION OF SUNDRY LAWS. 2. **Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel**—Many of the laws enumerated in this chapter had been previously announced. As they were, however, of a general application, not suited to particular classes, but to the nation at large, so Moses seems, according to Divine instructions, to have rehearsed them, perhaps on different occasions and to successive divisions of the people, till “all the congregation of the children of Israel” were taught to know them. The will of God in the Old as well as the New Testament Church was not locked up in the repositories of an unknown tongue, but communicated plainly and openly to the people. **Ye shall be holy; for I . . . am holy**—Separated from the world, the people of God required to be holy, for His character, His laws and service were holy. (See 1 Peter, 1. 15.) 3. **Ye shall fear every man, his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths**—The duty of obedience to parents is placed in connection with the proper observance of the sabbaths, as both of them lying at the foundation of practical religion. 5-8. **if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, ye shall offer it at your own will**—Those which included thank offerings, or offerings made for vows, were always free-will offerings. Except the portions which, being waved and heaved, became the property of the priests (see ch. 3), the rest of the victim was eaten by the offerer and his friend, under the following regulations, however, that, if thank offerings, they were to be eaten on the day of their presentation; and if a free-will offering, although it might be eaten on the second day, yet if any remains of it were left till the third day, it was to be burnt, or deep criminality was incurred by the person who then ventured to partake of it. The reason of this strict prohibition seems to have been to prevent any mysterious virtue being superstitiously attached to meat offered on the altar. 9, 10. **When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of the field**—The right of the poor of Israel to glean after reapers, as well as to the unreaped corners of the field, was secured by a positive statute, and this, in addition to other enactments connected with the ceremonial law, formed a beneficial provision for their support. At the same time, proprietors were not obliged to admit them into the field until the grain had been carried off the field; and they seem also to have been left at liberty to choose the poor whom they deemed the most deserving or needful (Ruth, 2. 2, 8). This was the earliest poor law that we read of in the code of any people; and it combined in admirable union the obligation of a public duty with the exercise of private and voluntary benevolence at a time when the hearts of the rich would be strongly inclined to liberality. 11-16. **Ye shall not steal**—A variety of social duties are inculcated in this passage, chiefly in reference to common and little-thought-of vices to which mankind are exceedingly prone; such as committing petty frauds; or not scrupling to violate truth in transactions of business; ridiculing bodily infirmities; or cir-

culating stories to the prejudice of others. In opposition to these bad habits, a spirit of humanity and brotherly kindness is strongly enforced. 17. **thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour**— Instead of cherishing latent feelings of malice, or meditating purposes of revenge against a person who has committed an insult or injury against them, God's people were taught to remonstrate with the offender, and endeavour, by calm and kindly reason, to bring him to a sense of his fault. **not suffer sin upon him**—*lit.*, that ye may not participate in his sin. 18. **thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**—The word "neighbour" is used as synonymous with fellow-creature. The Israelites in a later age restricted its meaning as applicable only to their own countrymen. This narrow interpretation was refuted by our Lord in a beautiful parable (Luke, 10. 30). 19. **Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind**—This prohibition was probably intended to discourage a practice which seemed to infringe upon the economy which God has established in the animal kingdom. **thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed**—This also was directed against an idolatrous practice, *viz.*, that of the ancient Zabians, or fire-worshippers, who sowed different seeds, accompanying the act with magical rites and invocations; and commentators have generally thought the design of this and the preceding law was to put an end to the unnatural lusts and foolish superstitions which were prevalent among the heathen. But the reason of the prohibition was probably deeper; for those who have studied the diseases of land and vegetables tell us, that the practice of mingling seeds is injurious both to flowers and to grains. "If the various genera of the natural order Gramineæ, which includes the grains and grasses, should be sown in the same field, and flower at the same time, so that the pollen of the two flowers mix, a spurious seed will be the consequence, called by the farmers *chess*, and is always inferior, and unlike either of the two grains that produced it, in size, flavour, and nutritious principles. Independently of contributing to disease the soil, they never fail to produce the same in animals and men that feed on them." [WHITLAW.] **neither shall a garment of linen and woollen come upon thee**—although this precept, like the other two with which it is associated, was in all probability designed to root out some superstition, it seems to have had a farther meaning. The law, it is to be observed, did not prohibit the Israelites wearing many different kinds of cloths together, but only the two specified; and the observations and researches of modern science have proved that 'wool, when combined with linen, increases its power of passing off the electricity from the body; in hot climates, it brings on malignant fevers, and exhausts the strength, and when passing off from the body, it meets with the heated air, inflames and excoriates like a blister.'" [WHITLAW.] (See Ezekiel, 44. 17. 18.) 23-25. **ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised; three years . . . it shall not be eaten of**—"The wisdom of this law is very striking. Every gardener will teach us not to let fruit trees bear in their earliest years, but to pluck off the blossoms; and for this reason that they will thus thrive the better, and bear more abundantly afterward. The very expression, 'to regard them as un-

cumcised,' suggests the propriety of pinching them off; I do not say *cutting* them off, because it is generally the hand, and not a knife, that is employed in this operation." [MICHAELIS.] 26. **Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood**—(See ch. 17. 10.) **neither . . . use enchantment nor observe times**—The former refers to divination by serpents—one of the earliest form of enchantment, and the other means the observation, *lit.*, of *clouds*, as a study of the appearance and motion of clouds was a common way of foretelling good or bad fortune. Such absurd but deep-rooted superstition often put a stop to the prosecution of serious and important transactions, but they were forbidden especially as implying a want of faith in the being, or of reliance on the providence of God. 27. **Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, &c.**—It seems probable, that this fashion had been learned by the Israelites in Egypt, for the ancient Egyptians had their dark locks cropped short or shaved with great nicety, so that what remained on the crown appeared in the form of a circle surrounding the head, while the beard was dressed into a square form. This kind of coiffure had a highly idolatrous meaning; and it was adopted, with some slight variations, by almost all idolaters in ancient times. (Jeremiah, 9. 25, 26; 25. 23, where "in the utmost corners" means having the corners of their hair cut.) Frequently a lock or tuft of hair was left on the hinder part of the head, the rest being cut round in the form of a ring, as the Turks, Chinese and Hindoos do at the present day. **neither shalt thou mar, &c.**—The Egyptians used to cut or shave off their whiskers, as may be seen in the coffins of mummies, and the representations of divinities on the monuments. But the Hebrews, in order to separate them from the neighbouring nations, or perhaps to put a stop to some existing superstition, were forbidden to imitate this practice. It may appear surprising that Moses should condescend to such minutiae as that of regulating the fashion of the hair and the beard—matters which do not usually occupy the attention of a legislator—and which appear widely remote from the province either of government or of a religion. A strong presumption, therefore, arises that he had it in view by these regulations to combat some superstitious practices of the Egyptians. 28. **Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead**—The practice of making deep gashes on the face and arms and legs, in time of bereavement, was universal among the heathen, and it was deemed a becoming mark of respect for the dead, as well as a sort of propitiatory offering to the deities who presided over death and the grave. The Jews learned this custom in Egypt, and though weaned from it, relapsed in a later and degenerate age into this old superstition. (Isaiah, 15. 2; Jeremiah, 16. 6; 41. 5.) **nor print any marks upon you**—by *tattooing*—imprinting figures of flowers, leaves, stars, and other fanciful devices on various parts of their person—the impression was made sometimes by means of a hot iron, sometimes by ink or paint, as is done by the Arab females of the present day and the different castes of the Hindoos. It is probable that a strong propensity to adopt such marks in honour of some idol gave occasion to the prohibition in this verse; and they were wisely forbidden.



for they were signs of apostasy, and, when once made, were insuperable obstacles to a return. (See allusions to the practice, Isaiah, 44. 5 ; Revelation, 13. 17 ; 14. 1.) 30. **keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary**—This precept is frequently repeated along with the prohibition of idolatrous practices, and here it stands closely connected with the superstitions forbidden in the previous verses. 31. **Regard not them that have familiar spirits**—The *Hebrew* word, rendered “familiar spirit,” signifies the belly, and sometimes a leathern bottle, from its similarity to the belly. It was applied in the sense of this passage to ventriloquists, who pretended to have communication with the invisible world ; and the Hebrews were strictly forbidden to consult them ; as the vain but high pretensions of those impostors were derogatory to the honour of God, and subversive of their covenant relations with him as his people. **neither seek after wizards**—fortune-tellers, who pretended, as the *Hebrew* word indicates, to prognosticate by palmistry, or an inspection of the lines of the hand, the future fate of those who applied to them. 33, 34. **if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him**—The Israelites were to hold out encouragement to strangers to settle among them, that they might be brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God ; and with this view, they were enjoined to treat them not as aliens, but as friends, on the ground that they themselves, who were strangers in Egypt, were at first kindly and hospitably received in that country. 37. **I am the Lord**—This solemn admonition, by which these various precepts are repeatedly sanctioned, is equivalent to “I, your Creator—your Deliverer from bondage, and your Sovereign, who have wisdom to establish laws, have power also to punish the violation of them.” It was well fitted to impress the minds of the Israelites with a sense of their duty, and God's claims to obedience.

## CHAPTER XX

1-27. GIVING ONE'S SEED TO MOLECH. 2. **Whosoever . . . giveth any of his seed unto Molech**—See ch. 18. 21. **The people of the land shall stone him with stones, &c.**—Criminals who were condemned to be stoned were led, with their hands bound, without the gates to a small eminence, where was a large stone placed at the bottom. When they had approached within ten cubits of the spot, they were exhorted to confess, that by faith and repentance their souls might be saved. When led forward to within four cubits, they were stripped almost naked, and received some stupefying draught, during which the witnesses prepared, by leaving aside their outer garments, to carry into execution the capital sentence which the law bound them to do. The criminal being placed on the edge of the precipice, was then pushed backward, so that he fell down the perpendicular height on the stone lying below ; if not killed by the fall, the second witness dashed a large stone down upon his breast, and then the “people of the land,” who were bystanders, rushed forward, and with stones completed the work of death. (Matthew, 21. 44 ; Acts, 7. 58.) 4. **If the people of the**

land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, &c. — *i. e.*, connive at their countrymen practicing the horrid rites of Molech. Awful was it that any Hebrew parents could so violate their national covenant; and no wonder that God denounced the severest penalties against them and their families. 7-19. **Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy** — The minute specification of the incestuous and unnatural crimes here enumerated shows their sad prevalence among the idolatrous nations around, and the extreme proneness of the Israelites to follow the customs of their neighbours. It is to be understood, that, whenever mention is made that the offender was "to be put to death" without describing the mode, stoning is meant. The only instance of another form of capital punishment occurs in *v.* 14, that of being burnt with fire; and yet it is probable that even here death was first inflicted by stoning, and the body of the criminal afterward consumed by fire. (Joshua, 7. 15.) 20. **They shall die childless** — Either by the judgment of God they shall have no children, or their spurious offspring shall be denied by human authority the ordinary privileges of children in Israel. 24. **I have separated you from other people** — Their selection from the rest of the nations was for the all-important end of preserving the knowledge and worship of the true God amid the universal apostasy; and as the distinction of meats was one great means of completing that separation, the law about making a difference between clean and unclean beasts is here repeated with emphatic solemnity.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1-24. OF THE PRIESTS' MOURNING. 1. **There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people** — The obvious design of the regulations contained in this chapter was to keep inviolate the purity and dignity of the sacred office. Contact with a corpse, or even contiguity to the place where it lay, entailing ceremonial defilement (Numbers, 19. 14), all mourners were debarred from the tabernacle for a week; and as the exclusion of a priest during that period would have been attended with great inconvenience, the whole order were enjoined to abstain from all approaches to the dead, except at the funerals of relatives, to whom affection or necessity might call them to perform the last offices. Those exceptional cases, which are specified, were strictly confined to the members of their own family, within the nearest degrees of kindred. 4. **But he shall not defile himself** — "for any other," as the sense may be fully expressed. The priest, in discharging his sacred functions, might well be regarded as a chief man among his people, and by these defilements might be said to profane himself. [BISHOP PATRICK.] The word rendered "chief man" signifies also "a husband;" and the sense according to others is, "But he being a husband, shall not defile himself by the obsequies of a wife." (Ezekiel, 44. 25.) 5. **They shall not make baldness upon their head . . . nor . . . cuttings in their flesh** — The superstitious marks of sorrow, as well as the violent excesses in which the heathen in-

dulged at the death of their friends, were forbidden by a general law to the Hebrew people (ch. 19. 28). But the priests were to be laid under a special injunction, not only that they might exhibit examples of piety in the moderation of their grief, but also by the restraint of their passions, be the better qualified to administer the consolations of religion to others, and show, by their faith in the blessed resurrection, the reasons for sorrowing not as those who have no hope. 7-9. **They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane**—Private individuals might form several connections, which were forbidden as inexpedient or improper in priests. The respectability of their office, and the honour of religion, required unblemished sanctity in their families as well as themselves, and departures from it in their case was visited with severer punishment than in that of others. 10-15. **he that is the high priest among his brethren . . . shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes**—The indulgence in the accepted cases of family bereavement, mentioned above, which was granted to the common priests, was denied to him; for his absence from the sanctuary, for the removal of any contracted defilement, could not have been dispensed with, neither could he have acted as intercessor for the people, unless ceremonially clean. Moreover, the high dignity of his office demanded a corresponding superiority in personal holiness, and stringent rules were prescribed for the purpose of upholding the suitable dignity of his station and family. The same rules are extended to the families of Christian ministers. (1 Timothy, 3. 2; Titus, 1. 6.) 16-24. **Whosoever he be . . . that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God**—As visible things exert a strong influence on the minds of men, any physical infirmity or malformation of body in the ministers of religion, which disturbs the associations or excites ridicule, tends to detract from the weight and authority of the sacred office. Priests labouring under any personal defect were not allowed to officiate at the public service; they might be employed in some inferior duties about the sanctuary, but could not perform any sacred office. In all these regulations for preserving the unsullied purity of the sacred character and office, there was a typical reference to the priesthood of Christ. (Hebrews, 7. 26.)

## CHAPTER XXII.

1-9. THE PRIESTS IN THEIR UNCLEANNESS. 2. **Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things**—“To separate” means, in the language of the Mosaic ritual, “to abstain;” and therefore the import of this injunction is, that the priests should abstain from eating that part of the sacrifices which, though belonging to their order, was to be partaken of only by such of them as were free from legal impurities. **they that profane not my holy name in those things which they hallow unto me, &c.**—*i. e.*, let them not, by their want of due reverence, give occasion to profane my holy name. A careless or irreverent use of things consecrated to God, tends to dishonour the

name and bring disrespect on the worship of God. 3. **Whosoever he be . . . that goeth unto the holy things** — The multitude of minute restrictions to which the priests, from accidental defilement, were subjected, by keeping them constantly on their guard, lest they should be unfit for the sacred service, tended to preserve in full exercise the feeling of awe and submission to the authority of God. The ideas of sin and duty were awakened in their breasts by every case to which either an interdict or an injunction was applied. But why enact an express statute for priests disqualified by the leprosy or polluting touch of a carcase, when a general law was already in force which excluded from society all persons in that condition? Because priests might be apt, from familiarity to trifle with religion, and in committing irregularities or sins, to shelter themselves under the cloak of the sacred office. This law, therefore, was passed, specifying the chief forms of temporary defilement which excluded from the sanctuary, that priests might not deem themselves entitled to greater license than the rest of the people; and that so far from being in any degree exempted from the sanctions of the law, they were under greater obligations, by their priestly station, to observe it in its strict letter and its smallest enactments. 4-6. **wash his flesh with water** — Any Israelite who had contracted a defilement of such a nature as debarred him from the enjoyment of his wonted privileges, and had been legally cleansed from the disqualifying impurity, was bound to indicate his state of recovery by the immersion of his whole person in water. Although all ceremonial impurity formed a ground of exclusion, there were degrees of impurity which entailed a longer or shorter period of excommunication, and for the removal of which different rites required to be observed according to the trivial or the malignant nature of the case. A person who came inadvertently into contact with an unclean animal was rendered unclean for a specified period; and then, at the expiry of that term, he washed, in token of his recovered purity. But a leper was unclean, so long as he remained subject to that disease, and on his convalescence, he also washed not to cleanse himself, for the water was ineffectual for that purpose, but to signify that he was clean. Not a single case is recorded of a leper being restored to communion by the use of water; it served only as an outward and visible sign that such a restoration was to be made. The book of Leviticus abounds with examples which show that in all the ceremonial washings, as uncleanness meant loss of privileges, so baptism with water indicated a restoration to those privileges. There was no exemption; for as the unclean Israelite was exiled from the congregation, so the unclean priest was disqualified from executing his sacred functions in the sanctuary; and in the case of both, the same observance was required — a formal intimation of their being re-admitted to forfeited privileges was intimated by the appointed rite of baptism. If any one neglected or refused to perform the washing, he disobeyed a positive precept, and he remained in his uncleanness; he forbore to avail himself of this privilege, and was therefore said to be "cut off" from the presence of the Lord. 8. **dieth of itself** — The feelings of nature

revolt against such food, it might have been left to the discretion of the Hebrews, who it may be supposed, like the people of all civilized nations, would have abstained from the use of it without any positive interdict. But an express precept was necessary to show them that whatever died naturally or from disease, was prohibited to them by the operation of that law which forbade them the use of any meat with its blood.

**10-16. WHO OF THE PRIESTS' HOUSE MAY EAT OF THEM. 10. There shall no stranger eat the holy thing**—The portion of the sacrifices assigned for the support of the officiating priests was restricted to the exclusive use of his own family. A temporary guest or a hired servant was not at liberty to eat of them; but an exception was made in favour of a bought or home-born slave, because such was a stated member of his household. On the same principle, his own daughter, who married a husband not a priest, could not eat of them; though, if a widow and childless, she was re-instated in the privileges of her father's house as before her marriage. But if she had become a mother, as her children had no right to the privileges of the priesthood, she was under a necessity of finding support for them elsewhere than under her father's roof.

**13. There shall no stranger eat thereof**—The interdict recorded (*v.* 10) is repeated to show its stringency. All the Hebrews, even the nearest neighbours of the priest, the members of his family excepted, were considered strangers in this respect that they had no right to eat of things offered at the altar. **14. If a man eat of the holy things unwittingly**—A common Israelite might unconsciously partake of what had been offered as tithes, first-fruits, &c., and on discovering his unintentional error, he was not only to restore as much as he had used, but be fined in a fifth part more for the priest to carry into the sanctuary. **15, 16. they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel**—There is some difficulty felt in determining to whom "they" refers. The subject of the preceding context being occupied about the priests, it is supposed by some that this relates to them also; and the meaning is, that the whole people would incur guilt through the fault of the priests, if they should defile the sacred offerings, which they would have done had they presented them while under any defilement.

[CALVIN.] According to others, "the children of Israel" is the nominative in the sentence; which thus signifies, the children of Israel shall not profane or defile their offerings, by touching them or reserving any part of them, lest they incur the guilt of eating what is divinely appointed to the priests alone. [CALMET.]

**17-33. THE SACRIFICES MUST BE WITHOUT BLEMISH. 19. Ye shall offer at your own will**—rather, to your being accepted. **a male without blemish**—This law (*ch.* 1. 3) is founded on a sense of natural propriety, which required the greatest care to be taken in the selection of animals for sacrifice. The reason for this extreme caution is found in the fact, that sacrifices are either an expression of praise to God for his goodness, or else they are the designed means of conciliating or retaining His favour. No victim that was not perfect in its kind could be deemed a fitting instrument for such purposes, if we assume that the significance of sacrifices is

derived entirely from their relation to Jehovah. Sacrifices may be likened to gifts made to a king by his subjects, and hence the reasonableness of God's strong remonstrance with the worldly-minded Jews (Malachi, i. 8). If the tabernacle, and subsequently the temple, were considered the palace of the great King, then the sacrifices would answer to presents as offered to a monarch on various occasions by his subjects; and in this light they would be the appropriate expressions of their feelings toward their sovereign. When a subject wished to do honour to his sovereign, to acknowledge allegiance, to appease his anger, to supplicate forgiveness, or to intercede for another, he brought a present; and all the ideas involved in sacrifices correspond to these sentiments—those of gratitude, of worship, of prayer, of confession and atonement. [BIB. SAC.] 23. **that mayst thou offer, &c.**—The passage should be rendered thus; if thou offer it either for a free-will offering, or for a vow, it shall not be accepted. This sacrifice being required to be “without blemish,” symbolically implied that the people of God were to dedicate themselves wholly with sincere purpose of heart, and its being required to be “perfect to be accepted,” led them typically to Him, without whom no sacrifice could be offered acceptable to God. 27, 28. **it shall be seven days under the dam**—Animals were not considered perfect nor good for food till the eighth day. As sacrifices are called the bread or food of God (*v.* 25), to offer them immediately after birth, when they were unfit to be eaten, would have indicated a contempt of religion; and besides this prohibition, as well as that contained in the following verse, inculcated a lesson of humanity or tenderness to the dam, as well as secured the sacrifices from all appearance of unfeeling cruelty.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

1-4. OF SUNDRY FEASTS. 2. **Speak unto the children of Israel concerning the feasts of the Lord**—*lit.*, “the times of assembling or solemnities” (Isaiah, 33. 20); and this is a preferable rendering, applicable to all sacred seasons mentioned in this chapter, even the day of atonement, which was observed as a fast. They were appointed by the direct authority of God, and announced by a public proclamation, which is called “the joyful sound.” (Psalm 89. 15.) Those “holy convocations” were evidences of Divine wisdom, and eminently subservient to the maintenance and diffusion of religious knowledge and piety. 3. **Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest**—(See Exodus, 20. 8, 9.) The Sabbath has the precedence given to it, and it was to be “a holy convocation,” observed by families “in their dwellings;” where practicable, by the people repairing to the door of the tabernacle; at later periods, by meeting in the schools of the prophets, and in synagogues. 4. **these are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons**—Their observance took place in the parts of the year corresponding to our March, May and September. Divine wisdom was manifested in fixing them at those periods; in winter, when the days were short, and

the roads broken up, a long journey was impracticable; while in summer, the harvest and vintage gave busy employment in the fields. Besides, another reason for the choice of those seasons probably was to counteract the influence of Egyptian associations and habits. And God appointed more sacred festivals for the Israelites in the month of September than the people of Egypt had in honour of their idols. These institutions, however, were for the most part prospective, the observance being not binding on the Israelites during their wanderings in the wilderness, while the regular celebration was not to commence till their settlement in Canaan.

**5-8. THE PASSOVER. the Lord's passover**—(See Exodus, 12. 2, 14, 18.) The institution of the Passover was intended to be a perpetual memorial of the circumstances attending the redemption of the Israelites, while it had a typical reference to a greater redemption to be effected for God's spiritual people. On the first and last days of this feast, the people were forbidden to work; but while on the Sabbath they were not to do *any* work, on feast days they were permitted to dress meat—and hence the prohibition is restricted to “no servile work.” At the same time, those two days were devoted to “holy convocation”—special seasons of social devotion. In addition to the ordinary sacrifices of every day, there were to be “offerings by fire” on the altar (see Numbers 28. 19), while unleavened bread was to be eaten in families all the seven days. (See I Corinthians, 5. 8.)

**9-14. THE SHEAF OF FIRST-FRUITS. 10. ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest**—A sheaf, *lit.*, an omer, of the first-fruits of the barley harvest. The barley being sooner ripe than the other grains, the reaping of it formed the commencement of the general harvest season. The offering described in this passage was made on the 16th of the first month, and the day following the first Passover Sabbath, which was on the 15th (corresponding to the beginning of our April); but it was reaped after sunset on the previous evening by persons deputed to go with sickles, and obtain samples from different fields. These being laid together in a sheaf or loose bundle, were brought to the court of the temple, where the grain was winnowed, parched, and bruised in a mortar. Then, after some incense had been sprinkled on it, the priest waved it aloft before the Lord toward the four different points of the compass, took a part of it and threw it into the fire of the altar—all the rest being reserved to himself. It was a proper and beautiful act, expressive of dependence on the God of nature and providence—common among all people, but more especially becoming the Israelites, who owed their land itself as well as all it produced to the Divine bounty. The offering of the wave-sheaf sanctified the whole harvest. (Romans, 11. 16.) At the same time, this feast had a typical character, and pre-intimated the resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians, 15. 20), who rose from the dead on the very day the first-fruits were offered.

**15-22. FEAST OF PENTECOST. 15. Ye shall count from the morrow after the Sabbath**—*i. e.*, after the first day of the passover

week, which was observed as a Sabbath. 16. **Number fifty days** — The forty-ninth day after the presentation of the first-fruits, or the fiftieth, including it, was the feast of Pentecost. (See, also, Exodus, 23. 16; Deuteronomy, 16. 9.) 17. **Ye shall bring out of your habitations, two wave loaves of two tenth deals, &c.** — These loaves were made of "fine" or wheaten flour, the quantity contained in them being somewhat more than ten lbs. weight. As the wave-sheaf gave the signal for the commencement, the two loaves solemnized the termination of the harvest season. They were the first-fruits of that season, being offered unto the Lord by the priest in name of the whole nation. (See Exodus, 34, 22.) The loaves used at the Passover were unleavened; those presented at Pentecost were leavened — a difference which is thus accounted for, that the one was a memorial of the bread hastily prepared at their departure, while the other was a tribute of gratitude to God for their daily food, which was leavened. 21. **Ye shall proclaim on the self-same day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you; ye shall do no servile work therein** — Though it extended over a week, the first day only was held as a Sabbath, both for the national offering of first-fruits, and a memorial of the giving of the law. 22. **Thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy fields when thou reapest, &c.** — See ch. 19. 9. The repetition of this law here probably arose from the priests reminding the people, at the presentation of the first-fruits, to unite piety to God with charity to the poor.

**23-25. FEAST OF TRUMPETS.** **In the seventh month, the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath** — That was the first day of the ancient civil year. **a memorial of blowing of trumpets** — Jewish writers say that the trumpets were sounded thirty successive times, and the reason for the institution was for the double purpose of announcing the commencement of the new year, which was (*v.* 25), to be religiously observed (see Numbers, 29. 3), and of preparing the people for the approaching solemn feast. **27-32. there shall be a day of atonement . . . and ye shall afflict your souls** — An unusual festival, at which the sins of the whole year were expiated. (See ch. 16. 29-34.) It is here only stated that the severest penalty was incurred by the violation of this day. **33-44. The feast of tabernacles, for seven days unto the Lord** — This festival, which was instituted in grateful commemoration of the Israelites having securely dwelt in booths or tabernacles in the wilderness, was the third of the three great annual festivals, and, like the other two, it lasted a week. It began on the fifteenth day of the month, corresponding to the end of our September and beginning of October, which was observed as a Sabbath; and it could be celebrated only at the place of the sanctuary, offerings being made on the altar every day of its continuance. The Jews were commanded during the whole period of the festival to dwell in booths, which were erected on the flat roofs of houses, in the streets or fields; and the trees made use of are by some stated to be the citron, the palm, the myrtle, and the willow, while others maintain the people were allowed to take any trees they could obtain that were distinguished for verdure and fragrance. While the



solid branches were reserved for the construction of the booths, the lighter branches were carried by men, who marched in triumphal procession, singing psalms, and crying "Hosanna!" which signifies, "Save, we beseech thee!" (Psalm 118. 15, 25, 26.) It was a season of great rejoicing. But the ceremony of drawing water from the pool, which was done on the last day, seems to have been the introduction of a later period. (John, 7. 37.) That last day was the eighth, and, on account of the scene at Siloam, was called "the great day of the feast." The feast of ingathering, when the vintage was over, was celebrated also on that day, and as the conclusion of one of the great festivals it was kept as a Sabbath.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**1-23. OIL FOR THE LAMPS.** 2. **Command the children of Israel**—This is the repetition of a law given (Exodus, 27. 20, 21). **pure oil olive beaten**—or cold-drawn, which is always of great purity. 3, 4. **Aaron shall order it from the evening unto the morning**—The daily presence of the priests was necessary to superintend the cleaning and trimming. **of the pure candlestick**—so called because of pure gold. This was symbolical of the light which ministers are to diffuse through the Church. 5-9. **Take fine flour and bake twelve cakes**—for the show-bread, as previously appointed. (Exodus, 25. 30.) Those cakes were baked by the Levites, the flour being furnished by the people (1 Chronicles, 9. 32; 23. 29), oil, wine and salt, being the other ingredients. (ch. 2. 13.) **two tenth deals**—*i. e.*, of an ephah, thirteen and a-half lbs. weight each; and on each row or pile of cakes, some frankincense was strewed which, being burnt, led to the show-bread being called "an offering made by fire." Every Sabbath a fresh supply was furnished; hot loaves were placed on the altar instead of the stale ones which, having lain a week, were removed, and eaten only by the priests, except in cases of necessity. (1 Samuel, 21. 3-6; also, Luke, 6. 3, 4.) 10. **The son of an Israelitish woman, &c.**—This passage narrates the enactment of a new law with a detail of the circumstances which gave rise to it. The "mixed multitude" that accompanied the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt, creates a presumption that marriage connections of the kind described were not infrequent. And it was most natural, in the relative circumstances of the two people, that the father should be an Egyptian and the mother an Israelite. 11. **the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord**—A youth of this half-blood, having quarreled with a native Israelite, vented his rage in some horrid form of impiety. It was a common practice among the Egyptians to curse their idols when disappointed in obtaining the object of their petitions. The Egyptian mind of this youth thought the greatest insult to his opponent was to blaspheme the object of his religious reverence. He spoke disrespectfully of One who sustained the double character of the king as well as the God of the Hebrew people; and as the offense was a new one he was put in ward till the mind of the Lord was ascertained as to

his disposal. 14. **Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp**—All executions took place without the camp; and this arrangement probably originated in the idea that, as the Israelites were to be “a holy people,” all flagrant offenders should be thrust out of their society. **let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, &c.**—The imposition of hands formed a public and solemn testimony against the crime and at the same time made the punishment legal. 16. **As well the stranger as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death**—Although strangers were not obliged to be circumcised, yet, by joining the Israelitish camp, they became amenable to the law, especially that which related to blasphemy. 17-22. **He that killeth any man shall surely be put to death**—These verses contain a repetition of some other laws, relating to offenses of a social nature, the penalties of which were to be inflicted, not by the hand of private parties, but through the medium of the judges before whom the cause was brought. 23. **The children of Israel did as the Lord commanded**—The chapter closes with the execution of Shelomith’s son, and stoning having afterward become the established punishment in all cases of blasphemy, illustrates the fate of Stephen who suffered under a false imputation of that crime.

## CHAPTER XXV.

**1-7. SABBATH OF THE SEVENTH YEAR.** 2-4. **When ye come to the land which I give unto you**—It has been questioned on what year, after the occupation of Canaan, the Sabbatic year began to be observed. Some think it was the seventh year after their entrance. But others, considering that as the first six years were spent in the conquest and division of the land (Joshua, 5. 12), and that the Sabbatical year was to be observed after six years of agriculture, maintain that the observance did not commence till the 14th year. **the land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord**—This was a very peculiar arrangement. Not only all agricultural processes were to be intermitted every seventh year but the cultivators had no right to the soil. It lay entirely fallow, and its spontaneous produce was the common property of the poor and the stranger, the cattle and game. This year of rest was to invigorate the productive powers of the land as the weekly Sabbath was a refreshment to men and cattle. It commenced immediately after the feast of ingathering; and it was calculated to teach the people, in a remarkable manner, the reality of the presence and providential power of God.

**8-23. THE JUBILEE.** **Thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years**—This most extraordinary of all civil institutions, which received the name of “Jubilee,” from a *Hebrew* word signifying a musical instrument, a horn or trumpet, began on the tenth day of the seventh month or the great day of atonement, when, by order of the public authorities, the sound of trumpets proclaimed the beginning of the universal redemption. All prisoners and cap-

tives obtained their liberties, slaves were declared free and debtors were absolved. The land, as on the Sabbatic year, was neither sowed nor reaped but allowed to enjoy with its inhabitants Sabbath of repose; and its natural produce was the common property of all. Moreover, every inheritance throughout the land of Judea was restored to its ancient owner. **ye shall hallow the fiftieth year** — Much difference of opinion exists as to whether the jubilee was observed on the 49th or in round numbers, it is called the fiftieth. The prevailing opinion, both in ancient and modern times, has been in favour of the latter. 12. **Ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field, &c.** — All that the ground yielded spontaneously during that period might be eaten for their necessary subsistence but no persons were at liberty to hoard or form a private stock in reserve. 13. **Ye shall return every man unto his possession, &c.** Inheritances, from whatever cause, and how frequently soever they had been alienated, came back into the hands of the original proprietors. This law of entail, by which the right heir could never be excluded, was a provision of great wisdom for preserving families and tribes perfectly distinct, and their genealogies faithfully recorded in order that all might have evidence to establish their right to the ancestral property. Hence the tribe and family of Christ were readily discovered at his birth. 17. **Ye shall not oppress one another but thou shalt fear thy God** — This, which is the same as *v.* 14, related to the sale or purchase of possessions and the duty of paying an honest and equitable regard, on both sides, to the limited period during which the bargain could stand. The object of the legislator was, as far as possible, to maintain the original order of families and an equality of condition among the people. 21, 22. **I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years, &c.** — A provision was made, by the special interposition of God, to supply the deficiency of food which would otherwise have resulted from the suspension of all labour during the Sabbatic year. The sixth year was to yield a miraculous supply for three continuous years. And the remark is applicable to the year of Jubilee as well as the Sabbatic year. (See allusions to this extraordinary provision in 2 Kings, 19. 29; Isaiah, 37. 30.) None but a legislator who was conscious of acting under Divine authority would have staked his character on so singular an enactment as that of the Sabbatic year; and none but a people who had witnessed the fulfillment of the Divine promise would have been induced to suspend the agricultural preparations on a recurrence of a periodical Jubilee. 23-28. **The land shall not be sold for ever** — or, “be quite cut off,” as the margin better renders it. The land was God’s, and, in prosecution of an important design, he gave it to the people of his choice, dividing it among their tribes and families — who, however, held it of Him merely as tenants at will, and had no right or power of disposing of it to strangers. In necessitous circumstances, individuals might effect a temporary sale. But they possessed the right of redeeming it, at *any time*, on payment of an adequate compensation to the present holder; and by the enactments of the Jubilee they recovered it free — so that the land was

rendered inalienable. (See an exception to this law, ch. 27. 20.) 29-31. **If a man sell a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold** — All sales of houses were subject to the same condition. But there was a difference between the houses of villages, which, being connected with agriculture, were treated as parts of the land; and houses possessed by trading people or foreigners in walled towns, which could only be redeemed within the year after the sale; if not then redeemed, these did not revert to the former owner at the Jubilee. 32-34. **Notwithstanding the city of the Levites, &c.** — The Levites, having no possessions but their towns and their houses, the law conferred on them the same privileges that were granted to the lands of the other Israelites. A certain portion of the lands surrounding the Levitical cities was appropriated to them for the pasturage of their cattle and flocks. (Numbers, 35. 4, 5.) This was a permanent endowment for the support of the ministry, and could not be alienated for any time. The Levites, however, were at liberty to make exchanges among themselves; and a priest might sell his house, garden, and right of pasture to another priest, but not to an Israelite of another tribe. (Jeremiah, 31. 7-9.) 35-38. **If thy brother be waxed poor, relieve him** — This was a most benevolent provision for the poor and unfortunate, designed to aid them or alleviate the evils of their condition. Whether a native Israelite or a mere sojourner, his richer neighbour was required to give him food, lodging, and a supply of money without usury. The latter was severely condemned (Psalm 15. 5; Ezekiel, 18. 8, 17), but the prohibition cannot be considered as applicable to the modern practice of men in business borrowing and lending at legal rates of interest. 39-46. **If thy brother be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant** — An Israelite might be compelled, through misfortune, not only to mortgage his inheritance, but himself. In the event of his being reduced to this distress, he was to be treated not as a slave, but a hired servant, whose engagement was temporary, and who might, through the friendly aid of a relative, be redeemed at any time before the Jubilee. The ransom money was determined on a most equitable principle. Taking account of the number of years from the proposal to redeem, and the Jubilee — of the current wages of labour for that time, and multiplying the remaining years by that sum, the amount was to be paid to the master for his redemption. But if no such friendly interposition was made for a Hebrew slave, he continued in servitude till the year of Jubilee, when, as a matter of course, he regained his liberty, as well as his inheritance. Viewed in the various aspects in which it is presented in this chapter, the Jubilee was an admirable institution, and subservient in an eminent degree to uphold the interests of religion, social order, and freedom among the Israelites.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

**1, 2. OF IDOLATRY. 1. Ye shall make you no idols**—Idolatry had been previously forbidden (Exodus, 20. 4, 5), but the law was repeated here with reference to some particular forms of it that were very prevalent among the neighbouring nations. **a standing image**—*i. e.*, upright pillar. **the image of stone**—an obelisk, inscribed with hieroglyphical and superstitious characters. The former denoting the common and smaller pillars of the Syrians or Canaanites; the latter, pointing to the large and elaborate obelisks which the Egyptians worshipped as guardian divinities, or used as stones of adoration to stimulate religious worship. The Israelites were enjoined to beware of them. **2. Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary**—Very frequently in this book of the law, the Sabbath and the sanctuary are mentioned as antidotes to idolatry.

**3-13. A BLESSING TO THE OBEDIENT. 3. If ye walk in my statutes**—In that covenant into which God graciously entered with the people of Israel, He promised to bestow upon them a variety of blessings, so long as they continued obedient to Him as their Almighty Ruler; and in their subsequent history that people found every promise amply fulfilled, in the enjoyment of plenty, peace, a populous country, and victory over all enemies. **4. I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase**—Rain seldom fell in Judea except at two seasons—the former rain at the end of autumn—the seed-time; and the latter rain in spring, before the beginning of harvest. (Jeremiah, 5. 24.) **5. Your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time, &c.**—The barley harvest in Judea was about the middle of April; the wheat harvest about six weeks after, or in the beginning of June. After the harvest comes the vintage, and fruit gathering toward the latter end of July. Moses led the Hebrews to believe, that, provided they were faithful to God, there would be no idle time between the harvest and vintage, so great would be the increase. (See Amos, 9. 13.) This promise would be very animating to a people who had come from a country where, for three months, they were pent up without being able to walk abroad, from the fields being under water. **10. Ye shall eat old store**—Their stock of old corn would be still unexhausted and large when the next harvest brought a new supply. **13. I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright**—a metaphorical expression to denote their emancipation from Egyptian slavery.

**14-39. A CURSE TO THE DISOBEDIENT. But if ye will not hearken unto me, &c.**—In proportion to the great and manifold privileges bestowed upon the Israelites, would be the extent of their national criminality and the severity of their national punishments if they disobeyed. **16. I will even appoint over you terror**—the failing sickness. [PATRICK.] **consumption and the burning ague**—Some consider these as symptoms of the same disease; consumption followed by the shivering, burning and sweating fits that are the usual concomitants of that malady. According to the

Septuagint, ague is "the jaundice," which disorders the eyes and produces great depression of spirits. Others, however, consider the word as referring to a scorching wind; no certain explanation can be given. 16. **If ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more** — *i. e.*, with far more severe and protracted calamities. 19. **Will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass** — No figures could have been employed to convey a better idea of severe and long-continued famine. 22. **I will send wild beasts among you** — This was one of the four judgments threatened (Ezekiel, 14. 21; see, also, 2 Kings, 2. 24). **your highways shall be desolate** — Trade and commerce will be destroyed — freedom and safety will be gone — neither stranger nor native will be found on the roads. (Isaiah, 33. 8.) This is an exact picture of the present state of the Holy Land, which has long lain in a state of desolation, brought on by the sins of the ancient Jews. 26. **Ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, &c.** — The bread used in families is usually baked by women, and at home. But sometimes also, in times of scarcity, it is baked in public ovens for want of fuel; and the scarcity predicted here would be so great, that one oven would be sufficient to bake as much as ten women used in ordinary occasions to provide for family use; and even this scanty portion of bread would be distributed by weight. (Ezekiel, 4. 16.) 29. **Ye shall eat the flesh of your sons** — The revolting picture was actually exhibited at the siege of Samaria, at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Lamentations, 4. 10), and at the destruction of that city by the Romans. (See Deuteronomy, 28.) 30. **I will destroy your high places** — Consecrated inclosures on the tops of mountains, or on little hillocks, raised for practicing the rites of idolatry. **Cut down your images** — According to some, those images were made in the form of chariots (2 Kings, 23. 11); according to others, they were of a conical form, like small pyramids. Reared in honour of the sun, they were usually placed on a very high situation, to enable the worshippers to have a better view of the rising sun. They were forbidden to the Israelites, and when set up, ordered to be destroyed. **Cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, &c.** — Like the statues of idols, which, when broken, lie neglected and contemned, the Jews, during the sieges and subsequent captivity, often wanted the rites of sepulture. 31. **I will make your cities waste** — This destruction of its numerous and flourishing cities which was brought upon Judea, through the sins of Israel, took place by the forced removal of the people during, and long after, the captivity. But it is realized to a far greater extent now. **Bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours** — The tabernacle and temple, as is evident from the tenor of the subsequent clause, in which God announces that He will not accept or regard their sacrifices. 33. **I will scatter you among the heathen, &c.** — as was done when the elite of the nation were removed into Assyria and placed in various parts of that kingdom. 34. **Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, &c.** — A long arrear of Sabbatic years had accumulated through

the avarice and apostacy of the Israelites, who had deprived their land of its appointed season of rest. The number of those Sabbathic years seems to have been seventy, as determined by the duration of the captivity. This early prediction is very remarkable, considering that the usual policy of the Assyrian conquerors was to send colonies to cultivate and inhabit their newly acquired provinces. 38. **The land of your enemies shall eat you up, &c.** — On the removal of the ten tribes into captivity, they never returned, and all traces of them were lost. 40-45. **If they shall confess their iniquity, &c.** — This passage holds out the gracious promise of Divine forgiveness and favour on their repentance, and their happy restoration to their own land, in memory of the covenant made with their fathers. (Romans, 2.) 46. **These are the statutes and judgments and laws** — It has been thought by some that the last chapter was originally placed after the 25th [ADAM CLARKE], while others consider that the next chapter was added as an appendix, in consequence of many people being influenced by the promises and threats of the preceding one, to resolve that they would dedicate themselves and their possessions to God. [CALMET.]

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1-19. CONCERNING VOWS. 2-8. **When a man shall make a singular vow, &c.** — Persons have, at all times and in all places, been accustomed to present votive offerings, either from gratitude for benefits received, or in the event of deliverance from apprehended evil. And Moses was empowered, by Divine authority, to prescribe the conditions of this voluntary duty. **the person shall be for the Lord, &c.** — better rendered thus: “According to thy estimation, the person shall be for the Lord.” Persons might consecrate themselves or their children to the Divine service, in some inferior or servile kind of work about the sanctuary. (1 Samuel, 3. 1.) In the event of any change, the persons so devoted had the privilege in their power of redeeming themselves; and this chapter specifies the amount of the redemption money, which the priest had the discretionary power of reducing, as circumstances might seem to require. Those of mature age, between twenty and sixty, being capable of the greatest service, were rated highest; young people, from five to twenty, less, because not so serviceable; infants, though devotable by their parents before birth (1 Samuel, 1. 11), could not be offered nor redeemed till a month after it; old people were valued below the young, but above children; and the poor — in no case freed from payment in order to prevent the rash formation of vows — were rated according to their means. 9-13. **If it be a beast whereof men bring an offering unto the Lord** — a clean beast, after it had been vowed, it could neither be employed in common purposes nor exchanged for an equivalent — it must be sacrificed — or if, through some discovered blemish, it was unsuitable for the altar, it might be sold, and the money applied for the sacred service. If an unclean beast — such as an ass or camel, for instance — had been vowed, it was to be appropriated

to the use of the priest at the estimated value, or it might be redeemed by the person vowing on payment of that value, and the additional fine of a fifth more. 14-16. **When a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord, &c.** — In this case, the house having been valued by the priest and sold, the proceeds of the sale were to be dedicated to the sanctuary. But if the owner wished, on second thoughts, to redeem it, he might have it by adding a fifth part to the price. 16-24. **If a man shall sanctify unto the Lord some part of a field of his possession, &c.** — In the case of acquired property in land, if not redeemed, it returned to the donor at the Jubilee; whereas the part of an hereditary estate, which had been vowed, did not revert to the owner, but remained attached in perpetuity to the sanctuary. The reason of this remarkable difference was to lay every man under an obligation to redeem the property, or stimulate his nearest kinsman to do it, in order to prevent a patrimonial inheritance going out from any family in Israel. 26, 27. **Only the firstlings of the beasts** — These, in the case of clean beasts, being consecrated to God by a universal and standing law (Exodus. 13. 12; 34. 19), could not be devoted; and in that of unclean beasts, were subject to the rule mentioned (v. 11. 12). 28-29. **No devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, shall be sold or redeemed** — This relates to vows of the most solemn kind — the devotee accompanying his vow with a solemn imprecation on himself not to fail in accomplishing his declared purpose. **shall surely be put to death** — This announcement imported not that the person was to be sacrificed or doomed to a violent death; but only that he should remain till death unalterably in the devoted condition. The preceding regulations were evidently designed to prevent rashness in vowing (Ecclesiastes, 5. 4), and to encourage serious and considerate reflection in all matters between God and the soul. (Luke, 21. 4.) 30-33. **All the tithe of the land, whether the seed of the land** — This law gave the sanction of Divine authority to an ancient usage. (Genesis, 14. 20; 28. 22.) The whole produce of the land was subjected to the tithe tribute — it was a yearly rent which the Israelites, as tenants, paid to God, the owner of the land, and a thank offering they rendered to Him for the bounties of His providence. (See Proverbs, 3. 9; 1 Corinthians, 9. 11; Galatians, 6. 6.) 32. **Whatsoever passeth under the rod, &c.** — This alludes to the mode of taking the tithe of cattle, which were made to pass singly through a narrow gateway, where a person with a rod, tipped in ochre, stood, and counting them, marked the back of every tenth beast, whether male or female, sound or unsound. 34. **These are the commandments, &c.** — The laws contained in this book, for the most part ceremonial, had an important spiritual bearing, the study of which is highly instructive. (Romans, 10. 4; Hebrews, 4. 2; 12. 18.) They imposed a burdensome yoke (Acts, 15. 10), but yet in the infantine age of the Church formed the necessary discipline of “a schoolmaster to Christ.”



## THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED

# NUMBERS.

### CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1-54. **MOSES NUMBERING THE MEN OF WAR. 1. On the first day of the second month, etc.**—Thirteen months had elapsed since the exodus. About one month had been occupied in the journey, and the rest of the period had been passed in encampment amongst the recesses of Sinai, where the transactions took place, and the laws, religious and civil, were promulgated, which are contained in the two preceding books. As the tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month, and the order here mentioned was given on the first day of the second, some think the laws in Leviticus were all given in one month. The Israelites having been formed into a separate nation, under the special government of God as their king, it was necessary, before resuming their march towards the promised land, to put them into good order. And accordingly Moses was commissioned, along with Aaron, to take a census of the people. This census was incidentally noticed (Exodus, 38. 26), in reference to the poll-tax for the works of the tabernacle, but it is here described in detail, in order to show the relative increase and military strength of the different tribes. The enumeration was confined to those capable of bearing arms, and it was to be made with a careful distinction of the tribe, family and household to which every individual belonged. By this rule of summation many important advantages were secured—an exact genealogical register was formed—the relative strength of each tribe was ascertained, and the reason found for arranging the order of precedence in march, as well as disposing the different tribes in camp around the tabernacle. The promise of God to Abraham was seen to be fulfilled in the extraordinary increase of his posterity, and provision made for tracing the regular descent of the Messiah. **3. Aaron shall number them by their armies**—or companies. In their departure from Egypt they were divided into five grand companies (Exodus, 13. 18), but from the sojourn in the wilderness to the passage of the Jordan, they were formed into four great divisions. The latter is here referred to. **4-16. With you there shall be a man of every tribe, etc.**—The social condition of the Israelites in the wilderness bore a close resemblance to that of the nomad tribes of the East in the present day. The head of the tribe was a hereditary dignity, vested in the eldest son or some other to whom the right of primogeniture was transferred, and under whom were other inferior heads, also hereditary, among the different branches of the tribe. The Israelites being divided into twelve tribes, there were twelve chiefs appointed to assist in taking the census of the people. **These are the names of the men that shall stand with you, etc.**—Each is designated by adding the name of the ancestors of his tribe, the people of which were called “Beni-Reuben, Beni-

Levi," sons of Reuben, sons of Levi, according to the custom of the Arabs still, as well as other nations which are divided into clans, as the Macs of Scotland, the Aps of Wales, and the O's and Fitz's of Ireland. [CHALMERS.] **16-18. These were the renowned**—*lit.*, the called of the congregation, summoned by name; and they entered upon the survey the very day the order was given. **by their polls**—individually, one by one. **19. As the Lord commanded Moses, etc.**—The numbering of the people was not an act sinful in itself, as Moses did it by Divine appointment; but David incurred guilt by doing it without the authority of God. (See on 2 Samuel 24. 10.) **20-44. These are those that were numbered**—In this registration the tribe of Judah appears the most numerous; and accordingly, as the pre-eminence had been assigned to it by Jacob, it got the precedence in all the encampments of Israel. Of the two half-tribes of Joseph, who is seen to be "a fruitful bough," that of Ephraim was the larger, as had been predicted. The relative increase of all, as in the two just mentioned, was owing to the special blessing of God, conformably to the prophetic declaration of the dying patriarch. But the Divine blessing is usually conveyed through the influence of secondary causes; and there is reason to believe that the relative populousness of the tribes would, under God, depend upon the productiveness of the respective localities assigned to them. **45-46. All they that were numbered were six hundred thousand, etc.**—What an astonishing increase from seventy-five persons who went down to Egypt about 215 years before, and who were subjected to the greatest privations and hardships! And yet this enumeration was restricted to men from 20 years and upwards. Including women, children and old men, together with the Levites, the whole population of Israel, on the ordinary principles of computation, amounted to about 2,400,000. **47-54. But the Levites were not numbered among them**—They were obliged to keep a register of their own. They were consecrated to the priestly office, which in all countries has been exempted customarily, and in Israel by the express authority of God, from military service. The custody of the things devoted to the Divine service was assigned to them so exclusively, that "no stranger," *i.e.*, no person, not even an Israelite of any other tribe was allowed, under penalty of death, to approach these, and hence they encamped round the tabernacle, that there should be no manifestation of the Divine displeasure among the people. Thus, the numbering of the people was subservient to the separation of the Levites from those Israelites who were fit for military service, and to the practical introduction of the law respecting the first-born, for whom the tribe of Levi became a substitute.

## CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1-34. THE ORDER OF THE TRIBES IN THEIR TENTS. **2. Every man shall pitch by his own standard with the ensign of their father's house**—Standards were visible signs of a certain recognized form for directing the movements of large bodies of people. As the Israelites were commanded to encamp "each by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house," the direction has been considered as implying that they possessed three varieties—(1.) the great tribal

standards, which served as rallying points for the twelve large clans of the people ; (2.) the standards of the subdivided portions ; and (3.) those of families or houses. The latter must have been absolutely necessary, as one ensign only for a tribe would not have been visible at the extremities of so large a body. We possess no authentic information as to their forms, material, colors and devices. But it is probable that they might bear some resemblance to those of Egypt, only stripped of any idolatrous symbols. These were of an umbrella or a fan-like form, made of ostrich feathers, shawls, etc., lifted on the points of long poles, which were borne, either like the sacred central one, on a car, or on men's shoulders, whilst others might be like the beacon lights which are set on poles by Eastern pilgrims at night. Jewish writers say that the standards of the Hebrew tribes were symbols borrowed from the prophetic blessing of Jacob—Judah's being a lion, Benjamin's a wolf, etc., and that the ensigns or banners were distinguished by their colors—the colors of each tribe being the same as that of the precious stone representing that tribe in the breastplate of the high priest. **far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch**—*i.e.*, over against, at a reverential distance. The place of every tribe is successively and specifically described, because each had a certain part assigned both in the order of march and the disposition of the encampment. **3. On the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch, etc.**—Judah was placed at the head of a camp composed of three tribes rallying under its standard, said to have combined the united colors in the high priest's breastplate, but called by the name of Judah. They were appointed to occupy the east side, and to take the lead in the march, which, for the most part, was in an easterly direction. **5. Those that pitch next unto him**—*i.e.*, on the one side. **7. Then the tribe of Zebulun**—on the other side. While Judah's tribe was the most numerous, those of Issachar and Zebulun were also very numerous ; so that the association of those three tribes formed a strong and imposing van. **Nahshon, or Naasson, (Matthew, I. 4.) shall be captain**—It appears that the twelve men who were called to superintend the census were also appointed to be the captains of their respective tribes—a dignity which they owed probably to the circumstances, formerly noticed, of their holding the hereditary office of head or "prince." **10-31. On the south side the standard of the camp of Reuben**—The description given of the position of Reuben and his attendant tribes on the south, of Ephraim and his associates on the west, of Dan and his confederates on the north, with that of Judah on the east, suggests the idea of a square or quadrangle, which allowing one square cubit to each soldier whilst remaining close in the ranks, has been computed to extend over an area of somewhat more than twelve square miles. But into our calculations of the occupied space must be taken not only the fighting men, whose numbers are here given, but also the families, tents and baggage. The tabernacle or sacred tent of their Divine King, with the camp of the Levites around it (see on ch. 3. 38), formed the centre, as does the chief's in the encampments of all nomad people. In marching, this order was adhered to, with some necessary variations. Judah led the way, followed, it is most probable, by Issachar and Zebulun. Reuben, Simeon and Gad, formed the second great division. They were followed by the central company, composed of the

Levites bearing the tabernacle. Then the third and posterior squadron consisted of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin, while the hindmost place was assigned to Dan, Asher and Naphtali. Thus Judah's which was the most numerous, formed the van; and Dan's, which was the next in force, brought up the rear, while Reuben's and Ephraim's, with the tribes associated with them respectively, being the smallest and weakest, were placed in the centre. (See on ch. 10. 14.)

## CHAPTER III

Ver. 1-51. **THE LEVITES' SERVICE. 1. These are the generations of Aaron and Moses, etc.**—This chapter contains an account of their families; and although that of Moses is not detailed like his brother's, his children are included under the general designation of the Amramites, (*v.* 27,) a term which comprehends all the descendants of their common father Amram. The reason why the family of Moses was so undistinguished in this record is, that they were in the private ranks of the Levites, the dignity of the priesthood being conferred exclusively on the posterity of Aaron; and hence, as the sacerdotal order is the subject of this chapter, Aaron, contrary to the usual style of the sacred history, is mentioned before Moses. **in the day that the Lord spake with Moses in mount Sinai**—This is added, because at the date of the following record the family of Aaron was unbroken. **2-4. These are the names of the sons of Aaron**—All the sons of Aaron, four in number, were consecrated to minister in the priest's office. The two eldest enjoyed but a brief term of office; (Leviticus, 10. 1, 2; ch. 26. 61;) but Eleazar and Ithamar, the other two, were dutiful and performed the sacred service during the life-time of their father, as his assistants, and under his superintendence. **5-10. Bring the tribe of Levi near**—The *Heb.* word "bring near" is a sacrificial term, denoting the presentation of an offering to God; and the use of the word, therefore, in connection with the Levites, signifies that they were devoted as an offering to the sanctuary, no longer to be employed in any common offices. They were subordinate to the priests, who alone enjoyed the privilege of entering the holy place; but they were employed in discharging many of the humbler duties which belonged to the sanctuary, as well as in various offices of great utility and importance to the religion and morals of the people. **9. They are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel, etc.**—The priests hold the place of God, and the Levites are the servants of God in the obedience they render to the priests. **11-13. I have taken the Levites, etc.**—The consecration of this tribe did not originate in the legislative wisdom of Moses, but in the special appointment of God, who chose them as substitutes for the first-born. By an appointment made in memory of the last solemn judgment on Egypt, from which the Israelitish households were miraculously exempt, all the first-born were consecrated to God, (Exodus, 13. 12; 22. 29.) who thus, under peculiar circumstances, seemed to adopt the patriarchal usage of appointing the eldest to act as the priest of the family. But the privilege of redemption that was allowed the first-born opened the way for a change; and accordingly, on the full organization of the Mosaic economy, the administration of sacred things formerly

committed to the first-born was transferred from them to the Levites, who received that honor partly as a tribute to Moses and Aaron, partly because this tribe had distinguished themselves by their zeal in the affair of the golden calf, (Exodus, 32. 29,) and also because, being the smallest of the tribes, they could ill find suitable employment and support in the work. (See on Deuteronomy, 33. 9.) The designation of a special class for the sacred offices of religion, was a wise arrangement; for, on their settlement in Canaan, the people would be so occupied that they might not be at leisure to wait on the service of the sanctuary, and sacred things might, from various causes, fall into neglect. But the appointment of an entire tribe to the Divine service, insured the regular performance of the rites of religion. The subsequent portion of the chapter relates the formal substitution of this tribe. **I am the Lord—i.e.**, I decree it to be so; and being possessed of sovereign authority, expect full obedience.

**14-27. Number the children of Levi**—They were numbered as well as the other tribes; but the enumeration was made on a different principle, for while in the other tribes the amount of the males was calculated from twenty years and upward, in that of Levi they were counted from a month old and upwards. The reason of the distinction is obvious. In the other tribes the survey was made for purposes of war, from which the Levites were totally exempt, and were appointed to a work on which they entered as soon as they were capable of instruction. They are mentioned under the names of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, sons of Levi, and chiefs or ancestral heads of three subdivisions into which this tribe was distributed. Their duties were to assist in the conveyance of the tabernacle when the people were removing the various encampments and to form its guard whilst stationary—the Gershonites being stationed on the west, the Kohathites on the south, and the families of Merari on the north. The Kohathites had the principal place about the tabernacle, and charge of the most precious and sacred things—a distinction with which they were honored, probably, from the Aaronic family belonging to this division of the Levitical tribe. The Gershonites being the oldest, had the next honorable post assigned them, while the burden of the drudgery was thrown on the division of Merari. **32. Chief**—rather, chiefs of the Levites. Three persons are mentioned as chiefs of these respective divisions. And Eleazar presided over them; whence he is called “the second priest;” (2 Kings, 25. 18,) and in case of the high priest’s absence from illness or other necessary occasions, he performed the duties. (1 Kings, 4. 4.) **38. Those that encamp, etc.**—That being the entrance side was the post of honor, and consequently reserved to Moses and the priestly family. But the sons of Moses had no station there. **39. Twenty and two thousand**—The result of this census, though made on conditions most advantageous to Levi, proved it to be by far the smallest in Israel. The separate numbers stated in v. 22, 28, 34, when added together, amount to 22,300. The omission of the 300 is variously accounted for—by some, because they might be first-born, who were already devoted to God, and could not be counted as substitutes, and by others, because, in Scripture style, the sum is reckoned in round numbers. The most probable conjecture is, that as *Heb.* letters are employed for figures, one letter was, in the course of transcription, taken for another of like form but smaller value. **40, 51. Number all the first-born of the males of the children of Israel, etc.**—The

principle on which the enumeration of the Levites had been made was now to be applied to the other tribes. The number of their male children, from a month old and upwards, was to be reckoned, in order that a comparison might be instituted with that of the Levites, for the formal adoption of the latter as substitutes for the first-born. The Levites, amounting to 22,000, were given in exchange for an equal number of the first-born from the other tribes, leaving an excess of 273; and as there were no substitutes for these, they were redeemed at the rate of five shekels for each (ch. 13. 15, 16). Every Israelite would naturally wish that his son might be redeemed by a Levite without the payment of this tax, and yet some would have to incur the expense, for there were not Levites enough to make an equal exchange. Jewish writers say the matter was determined by lot, in this manner:—Moses put into an urn 22,600 pieces of parchment, on each of which he wrote "a son of Levi," and 273 more, containing the words "five shekels." These being shaken he ordered each of the first-born to put in his hand and take out a slip. If it contained the first inscription, the boy was redeemed by a Levite; if the latter, the parent had to pay. The ransom money, which, reckoning the shekel at half a crown, would amount to 12s. 6d. each, was appropriated to the use of the sanctuary. The excess of the general over the Levitical first-born is so small, that the only way of accounting for it is, by supposing those first-born only were counted as were males remaining in their parent's household, or that those first-born only were numbered which had been born since the departure from Egypt, when God claimed all the first-born as his special property. **41. The cattle of the Levites**—These, which they kept to graze on the glebes and meadows in the suburbs of their cities, and supply their families with dairy produce and animal food, were also taken as an equivalent for all the firstlings of the cattle which the Israelites at that time possessed. In consequence of this exchange the firstlings were not brought then, as afterwards, to the altar and the priests.

## CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1-49. OF THE LEVITES' SERVICE. **2, 3. Sons of Kohath from thirty years old and upward**—This age was specifically fixed on (see on ch. 8. 24.) as the full maturity of bodily energy to perform the laborious duties assigned them in the wilderness, as well as of mental activity to assist in the management of the sacred services. And hence it was the period of life at which the Baptist and Christ entered on their respective ministries. **even until fifty**—The term prescribed for active duty was a period of 20 years, at the end of which they were exempted from the physical labors of the office, though still expected to attend in the tabernacle. (ch. 8. 26.) **all that enter into the host**—so called from their number, the order and discipline maintained through their ranks, and their special duty as guards of the tabernacle. The *Heb.* word, however, signifies also a station or office: and hence the passage may be rendered, "All that enter into the sacerdotal office." (v. 23.) **4-15. This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath, etc.**—They are mentioned first, from their close connection with Aaron; and the special department of duty assigned to them during the jour-

neyings of Israel, accorded with the charge they had received of the precious contents of the tabernacle. But these were to be previously covered by the common priests, who, as well as the high priest, were admitted on such necessary occasions into the holy place. This was an exception to the general rule, which prohibited the entrance of any but the high priest. But when the cloud removed from the tabernacle, the sanctuary might be entered by the common priests, as to them was reserved the exclusive privilege of packing the sacred utensils; and it was not till the holy things were thus ready for carriage, that the Kohathites were allowed to approach. **5. Covering veil**—the inner veil, which separated the holy from the most holy place. (See on Exodus, 36. 3.) **6. Covering of badgers' skins**—See on Exodus, 25. 5. The covering, however, referred to, was not that of the tabernacle, but one made for the special purpose of protecting the ark. **put in the staves**—These golden staves were now taken out. (See on Exodus, 25. 15, compared with 1 Kings; 8. 8.) The *Heb.* word rendered "put in" signifies also "dispose," and probably refers here to their insertion through the openings in the covering made for receiving them, to preserve them from the touch of the carriers as well as from the influences of the weather. It is worthy of notice, that the coverings did not consist of canvass or coarse tarpauling, but of a kind which united beauty with decency. **7. Continual shew bread**—Though the people were in the wilderness fed upon manna, the sacred loaves were constantly made of corn, which was probably raised in small quantities from the verdant patches of the desert. **10. A bar**—or bier, formed of two poles fastened by two cross pieces, and borne by two men, after the fashion of a sedan chair. **12. Instruments of ministry**—the official dress of the priests. (Exodus, 31. 10.) **13. Shall take away the ashes from the altar, etc.**—The necessity of removing ashes from the altar, plainly implies that sacrifices were offered in the wilderness, (cf. Exodus, 18. 12; 24. 4.) though that rebellious race seem frequently to have neglected the duty. (Amos, 5. 25.) No mention is made of the sacred fire, but as, by Divine command, it was to be kept constantly burning, it must have been transferred to some pan or brazier under the covering, and borne by the appointed carriers. **15. the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it, but shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die**—The mode of transport was upon the shoulders of the Levites, (see on ch. 7. 9.) although afterwards wheeled vehicles were employed. (2 Samuel, 6. 3; 1 Chronicles, 15. 12.) And it was allowable to touch the covering, but not the things covered, on the penalty of death, which was more than once inflicted. (1 Samuel, 6. 19; 2 Samuel, 6. 6, 7.) This stern denunciation was designed to inspire a sentiment of deep and habitual reverence in the minds of those who were officially engaged about holy things. **16. To the office of Eleazar pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, etc.**—He was charged with the special duty of superintending the squadron who were employed in the carriage of the sacred furniture; besides, to his personal care were committed the materials requisite for the daily service, and which it was necessary he should have easily at command. (Exodus, 29. 38.) **17-20. Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites, etc.**—a solemn admonition to Moses and Aaron to beware, lest, by any negligence on their part, disorder and improprieties should creep in, and to take the

greatest care that all the parts of this important service be apportioned to the proper parties, lest the Kohathites should be disqualified for their high and honorable duties. The guilt of their death would be incurred by the superintending priest, if they failed to give proper directions, or allowed any irreverent familiarity with sacred things. **24-28. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, etc.**—They were appointed to carry “the curtains of the tabernacle”—*i.e.*, the goats’ hair covering of the tent—the ten curious curtains and embroidered hangings at the entrance, with their red morocco covering, etc. **28. Their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron, etc.**—The Levites were subject to the official command of the priests generally in doing the ordinary work of the tabernacle. But during the journeyings Eleazar, who was next in succession to his father, took the special charge of the Kohathites, while his brother Ithamar had the superintendence of the Gershonites and Merarites. **29-33. As for the sons of Merari**—They carried the coarser and heavier appurtenances, which, however, were so important and necessary, that an inventory was kept of them—not only on account of their number and variety, but of their comparative commonness and smallness, which might have led to their being lost or missing through carelessness, inadvertency or neglect. It was a useful lesson, showing that God disregards nothing pertaining to his service, and that even in the least and most trivial matters, he requires the duty of faithful obedience. **34-49. Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites, etc.**—This enumeration was made on a different principle from that which is recorded in the preceding chapter. That was confined to the males from a month old and upwards, while this was extended to all capable of service in the three classes of the Levitical tribe. In considering their relative numbers, the wisdom of Divine Providence appears in arranging that, whereas in the Kohathites and Gershonites, whose burdens were few and easier, there were but about a third part of them which were fit for service; the Merarites, whose burdens were more and heavier, had above one-half of them fit for this work. [POOLE.] The small population of this tribe, so inferior to that of the other tribes, is attempted to be explained, (see on ch. 3. 39).

## CHAPTER V.

Ver 1-4. **THE UNCLEAN TO BE REMOVED OUT OF THE CAMP. 2. Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper**—The exclusion of leprous persons from the camp in the wilderness, as from cities and villages afterwards, was a sanatory measure taken according to prescribed rules. (Leviticus, chaps. 13, 14.) This exclusion of lepers from society has been acted upon ever since; and it affords almost the only instance in which any kind of attention is paid in the East to the prevention of contagion. The usage still more or less prevails in the East among people who do not think the least precaution against the plague or cholera necessary; but judging from personal observation, we think that in Asia the leprosy has now much abated in frequency and virulence. It usually appears in a comparatively mild form in Egypt, Palestine, and other countries where the disorder is, or was, endemic.



Small societies of excluded lepers live miserably in paltry huts. Many of them are beggars, going out into the roads to solicit alms, which they receive in a wooden bowl; charitable people also sometimes bring different articles of food, which they leave on the ground at a short distance from the hut of the lepers, for whom it is intended. They are generally obliged to wear a distinctive badge, that people may know them at first sight, and be warned to avoid them. Other means were adopted amongst the ancient Jews by putting their hand on their mouth and crying, "Unclean, unclean." But their general treatment as to exclusion from society, was the same as now described. The association of the leper, however, in this passage, with those who were subject only to ceremonial uncleanness, shows that one important design in the temporary exile of such persons was to remove all impurities that reflected dishonor on the character and residence of Israel's king. And this vigilant care to maintain external cleanliness in the people was typically designed to teach them the practice of moral purity, or cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. The regulations made for ensuring cleanliness in the camp suggest the adoption of similar means for maintaining purity in the church. And although, in large communities of Christians, it may be often difficult or delicate to do this, the suspension, or, in flagrant cases of sin, the total excommunication of the offender from the privileges and communion of the church is an imperative duty as necessary to the moral purity of the Christian, as the exclusion of the leper from the camp was to physical health and ceremonial purity in the Jewish Church.

5-10. RESTITUTION ENJOINED. **6. when a man or a woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord**—This is a wrong or injury done by one man to the property of another, and as it is called "a trespass against the Lord," it is implied, in the case supposed, that the offence has been aggravated by prevaricating—by a false oath, or a fraudulent lie in denying it, which is a "trespass" committed against God, who is the sole judge of what is falsely sworn or spoken. (Acts, 5. 3, 4.) **And that person be guilty**—*i.e.*, from the obvious tenor of the passage, conscience-smitten, or brought to a sense and conviction of his evil conduct. (See on Leviticus, 6. 4.) In that case there must be, first, confession, a penitential acknowledgement of sin; secondly, restitution of the property, or the giving of an equivalent, with the additional fine of a fifth part, both as a compensation to the person defrauded, and as a penalty inflicted on the injurer, to deter others from the commission of similar trespasses. (See on Exodus, 22. 1.) The difference between the law recorded in that passage and this is, that the one was enacted against flagrant and determined thieves, the other against those whose necessities might have urged them into fraud, and whose consciences were distressed by their sin. This law also supposed the injured party to be dead, in which case, the compensation due to his representatives was to be paid to the priest, who, as God's deputy, received the required satisfaction. **9, 10. every offering shall be his**—Whatever was given in this way, or otherwise, as by free-will offerings, irrevocably belonged to the priest.

11-31. THE TRIAL OF JEALOUSY. **if any man's wife go aside**—This law was given both as a strong discouragement to conjugal infidelity on the part of a wife, and a sufficient protection of her from the consequences of a hasty and groundless suspicion on the part of the husband.

His suspicions, however, were sufficient in the absence of witnesses, (Leviticus, 20. 10) to warrant the trial described; and the course of proceeding to be followed was for the jealous husband to bring his wife unto the priest with an offering of barley meal, because none were allowed to approach the sanctuary empty-handed. (Exodus, 23. 15.) On other occasions there were mingled with the offering, oil which signified joy, and frankincense which denoted acceptance. (Psalm, 141. 2.) But on the occasion referred to, both these ingredients were to be excluded, partly because it was a solemn appeal to God in distressing circumstances, and partly because it was a sin offering on the part of the wife, who came before God in the character of a real or suspected offender.

**17. the priest shall take holy water**—Water from the laver, which was to be mixed with dust—an emblem of vileness and misery. (Genesis, 3. 14; Psalm, 22. 15.) **in an earthen vessel**—This fragile ware was chosen, because after being used it was broken in pieces. (Leviticus, 6. 28; II. 33.)

The whole circumstances of this awful ceremony—her being placed with her face toward the ark—her uncovered head, a sign of her being deprived of the protection of her husband (I Corinthians, II. 7),—the bitter potion being put into her hands preparatory to an appeal to God—the solemn adjuration of the priest (*v.* 19-22), all were calculated in no common degree to excite and appal the imagination of a person conscious of guilt, **21. the Lord make thee a curse, etc.**—a usual form of imprecation. (Isaiah, 65. 15; Jeremiah, 29. 22.)

**22. The woman shall say Amen, Amen**—The Israelites were accustomed, instead of formally repeating the words of an oath, merely to say Amen, a “so be it” to the imprecations it contained. The reduplication of the word was designed as an evidence of the woman’s innocence, and a willingness that God would do to her according to her desert. **23, 24.**

**Write these curses in a book**—The imprecations, along with her name, were inscribed in some kind of record—on parchment, or more probably on a wooden tablet. **blot them out with the bitter water**—If she were innocent, they could be easily erased, and perfectly harmless; but if guilty, she would experience the fatal effects of the water she had drunk.

**29. this is the law of jealousies**—Adultery discovered and proved was punished with death. But strongly suspected cases would occur, and this law made provision for the conviction of the guilty person. It was, however, not a trial conducted according to the forms of judicial process, but an ordeal through which a suspected adulteress was made to go—the ceremony being of that terrifying nature, that, on the known principles of human nature, guilt or innocence could not fail to appear. From the earliest times, the jealousy of Eastern people has established ordeals for the detection and punishment of suspected unchastity in wives. The practice was deep rooted as well as universal. And it has been thought, that the Israelites being strongly biassed in favor of such usages, this law of jealousies “was incorporated amongst the other institutions of the Mosaic economy, in order to free it from the idolatrous rites which the heathens had blended with it.” Viewed in this light, its sanction by Divine authority in a corrected and improved form exhibits a proof at once of the wisdom and condescension of God.

## CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1-21. THE LAW OF THE NAZARITE IN HIS SEPARATION. 2-6.

**When either man or woman . . . shall vow a vow of a Nazarite**—*i.e.*, “a separated one,” from a Hebrew word, to separate. And it was used to designate a class of persons who, under the impulse of extraordinary piety, and with a view to higher degrees of religious improvement, voluntarily renounced the occupations and pleasures of the world to dedicate themselves unreservedly to the divine service. The vow might be taken by either sex, provided they had the disposal of themselves (ch. 30. 4), and for a limited period—usually a month or a life-time. (Judges, 13. 5; 16. 17.) We do not know, perhaps, the whole extent of abstinence they practiced. But they separated themselves from three things in particular—*viz.*, from wine, and all the varieties of vinous produce; from the application of a razor to their head, allowing their hair to grow; and from pollution by a dead body. The reasons of the self-restriction are obvious. The use of wine tended to inflame the passions, intoxicate the brain, and create a taste for luxurious indulgence. The cutting off the hair being a recognised sign of uncleanness (Leviticus, 14. 8. 9), its unpolled luxuriance was a symbol of the purity he professed. Besides, its extraordinary length kept him in constant remembrance of his vow, as well as stimulated others to imitate his pious example. Moreover, contact with a dead body, disqualifying for the divine service, the Nazarite carefully avoided such a cause of unfitness, and, like the high priest, did not assist at the funeral rites of his nearest relatives, preferring his duty to God, to the indulgence of his strongest natural affections. **8-11. If any man die suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration**—Cases of sudden death might occur to make him contract pollution; and in such circumstances he required, after shaving his head, to make the prescribed offerings necessary for the removal of ceremonial defilement. (Leviticus, 15. 13; ch. 19. 11.) But by the terms of this law an accidental defilement vitiated the whole of his previous observances, and he required to begin the period of his Naziritism afresh. But even this full completion did not supersede the necessity of a sin-offering at the close. Sin mingles with our best and holiest performances, and the blood of sprinkling is necessary to procure acceptance to us and our services. **13-20. When the days of his separation are fulfilled, etc.**—On the accomplishment of a limited vow of Naziritism, Nazarites might cut their hair wherever they happened to be (Acts, 18. 18); but the hair was to be carefully kept and brought to the door of the sanctuary. Then after the presentation of sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, it was put under the vessel in which the peace-offerings were boiled; and the priest, taking the shoulder (Leviticus, 7. 32), when boiled, and a cake and wafer of the meat-offering, put them on the hands of the Nazarites to wave before the Lord, as a token of thanksgiving, and thus released them from their vow.

**23-27. THE FORM OF BLESSING THE PEOPLE. Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the congregation of Israel, etc.**—This passage records the solemn benediction which God appointed for dismissing the people at the close of the daily service. The repetition of the name “Lord” or “Jehovah” three times, expresses the great mystery of the Godhead—three persons, and yet one God. The expressions in the separate clauses correspond to the respective offices of the Father, to “bless and keep us;” of the Son, to be “gracious to us;” and of the Holy Ghost, to “give us peace.” And that the bene-

dition, though pronounced by the lips of a fellow-man, derived its virtue, not from the priest, but from God, the encouraging assurance was added, "I the Lord will bless them."

## CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1-89. **THE PRINCES' OFFERINGS. 1. the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle**—Those who take the word "day" as literally pointing to the exact date of the completion of the tabernacle, are under a necessity of considering the sacred narrative as disjointed, and this portion of the history from the seventh to the eleventh chapters as out of its place—the chronology requiring that it should have immediately followed the fortieth chapter of Exodus, which relates that the tabernacle was reared on the first day of the first month of the second year. But that the term "day" is used in a loose and indeterminate sense, as synonymous with *time*, is evident from the fact that not one day but several days were occupied with the transactions about to be described. So that this chapter stands in its proper place in the order of the history;—after the tabernacle and its instruments, the altar and its vessels, had been anointed (Leviticus, 8. 10), the Levites separated to the sacred service—the numbering of the people, and the disposal of the tribes about the tabernacle, in a certain order, which was observed by the princes in the presentation of their offerings. This would fix the period of the imposing ceremonial described in this chapter about a month after the completion of the tabernacle. **2, 3. The princes of Israel . . . brought their offering before the Lord**—The finishing of the sacred edifice would, it may well be imagined, be hailed as an auspicious occasion, diffusing great joy and thankfulness throughout the whole population of Israel. But the leading men, not content with participating in the general expression of satisfaction, distinguished themselves by a movement, which, while purely spontaneous, was at the same time so appropriate in the circumstances, and so equal in character, as indicates it to have been the result of concert and previous arrangement. It was an offer of the means of carriage, suitable to the migratory state of the nation in the wilderness, for transporting the tabernacle from place to place. In the pattern of that sacred tent exhibited on the mount, and to which its symbolic and typical character required a faithful adherence, no provision had been made for its removal in the frequent journeyings of the Israelites. That not being essential to the plan of the divine architect, was left to be accomplished by voluntary liberality; and whether we look to the judicious character of the gifts, or to the public manner in which they were presented, we have unmistakeable evidence of the pious and patriotic feelings from which they emanated, and the extensive interest the occasion produced. The offerers were "the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers," and the offering consisted of six covered wagons or litter cars, and twelve oxen, two of the princes being partners in a wagon, and each furnishing an ox. **4, 5. The Lord spake unto Moses saying, Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation**—They exhibited a beautiful example to all who are great in dignity and in wealth, to be foremost in contributing to the support, and in promoting the interests

of religion. The strictness of the injunctions Moses had received to adhere with scrupulous fidelity to the divine model of the tabernacle probably led him to doubt whether he was at liberty to act in this matter without orders. God, however, relieved him by declaring His acceptance of the free-will offerings, as well as by giving instructions as to the mode of their distribution amongst the Levites. It is probable that in doing so, He merely sanctioned the object for which they were offered, and that the practical wisdom of the offerers had previously determined that they should be distributed "unto the Levites, to every man according to his service;" *i.e.*, more or fewer were assigned to each of the Levitical divisions, as their department of duty seemed to require. This divine sanction it is of great importance to notice, as establishing the principle, that, while in the great matters of divine worship and church-government we are to adhere faithfully to the revealed rule of faith and duty, minor arrangements respecting them may be lawfully made, according to the means and convenience of God's people in different places. "There is a great deal left to human regulation—appendages of undoubted convenience, and which it were as absurd to resist on the ground that an express warrant cannot be produced for them, as to protest against the convening of the people to divine service, because there is no scripture for the erection and ringing of a church bell." [CHALMERS.]

**6-9. Moses took the waggons and the oxen**—The *Heb.* word seems to be fairly rendered by the word "waggons." Wheel carriages of some kind are certainly intended; and as they were covered, the best idea we can form of them is, that they bore some resemblance to our tilted wagons. That wheel carriages were anciently used in Egypt, and in what is now Asiatic Turkey, is attested, not only by history, but by existing sculptures and paintings. Some of these the Israelites might have brought with them at their departure; and others, the skilful artisans, who did the mechanical work of the tabernacle, could easily have constructed, according to models with which they had been familiar. Each wagon was drawn by two oxen, and a greater number does not seem to have been employed on any of the different occasions mentioned in Scripture. Oxen seem to have been generally used for draught in ancient times among other nations as well as the Hebrews; and they continue still to be employed in dragging the few carts which are in use in some parts of western Asia. [KITTO.]

**gave them unto the Levites**—The principle of distribution was natural and judicious—the Merarites having twice the number of wagons and oxen appropriated to them that the Gershonites had; obviously because, while the latter had charge only of the coverings and hangings—the light but precious and richly embroidered drapery—the former were appointed to transport all the heavy and bulky materials—the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets—in short, all the larger articles of furniture. Whoever thinks only of the enormous weight of metal, the gold, silver, brass, etc., that were on the bases, chapters, and pillars, etc., will probably come to the conclusion that four wagons and eight oxen were not nearly sufficient for the conveyance of so vast a load. Besides, the Merarites were not very numerous, as they amounted only to 3,200 men from thirty years and upwards; and, therefore, there is reason to suppose that a much greater number of wagons would afterwards be found necessary, and be furnished, than were given on this occasion. [CALMET.] Others, who consider the full

number of wagons and oxen to be stated in the sacred record, suppose that the Merarites may have carried many of the smaller things in their hands—the sockets, for instance, which being each a talent weight, was one man's burden. (2 Kings, 5. 23.) The Kohathites had neither wheeled vehicles nor beasts of burden assigned them, because, being charged with the transport of the furniture belonging to the holy place, the sacred worth and character of the vessels intrusted to them (see on ch. 4. 15) demanded a more honorable mode of conveyance. They were carried by those Levites shoulder-high. Even in this minute arrangement every reflecting reader will perceive the evidence of Divine wisdom and holiness; and a deviation from the prescribed rule of duty led, in one recorded instance, to a manifestation of holy displeasure, calculated to make a salutary and solemn impression. (2 Samuel, 6. 6-13.) **10, 11.**

**The princes offered for dedicating of the altar, etc.**—"Altar" is here used in the singular for the plural; for it is evident, from the kind of offerings, that the altars of burnt-offering and incense are both referred to. This was the first or proper dedication of those altars, which had been made by Moses and Aaron some time before. But it might be considered an additional *dedication*—those offerings being the first that were made for particular persons or tribes. **They shall offer each prince on his day, etc.**—Eastern princes were accustomed anciently, as they are in Persia still on a certain yearly festival, to sit upon their thrones in great state, when the princes and nobles, from all parts of their dominions, appear before them with tributary presents, which form a large proportion of their royal revenue. And in the offering of all gifts or presents to great personages, every article is presented singly and with ostentatious display. The tabernacle being the palace of their King, as well as the sanctuary of their God, the princes of Israel may be viewed, on the occasion under notice, as presenting their tributary offerings, and in the same manner of successive detail, which accords with the immemorial usages of the East. A day set apart for each, as much for the imposing solemnity and splendor of the ceremony, as for the prevention of disorder and hurry; and it is observable that, in the order of offering, regard was paid to priority not of birth, but of rank and dignity as they were ranged in the camp—beginning at the east, proceeding to the south, then to the west, and closing with the north, according to the course of the sun. **12-17. He that offered his offering the first day, Nahshon . . . of the tribe of Judah, etc.**—Judah having had the precedence assigned to it, the prince or head of that tribe was the first admitted to offer as its representative; and his offering, as well as that of the others, is thought, from its costliness, to have been furnished not from his own private means, but from the general contributions of each tribe. Some parts of the offering, as the animals for sacrifice, were for the ritual service of the day, the peace-offerings being by much the most numerous, as the princes and some of the people joined with the priests afterwards in celebrating the occasion with festive rejoicing. Hence the feast of dedication became afterwards an anniversary festival. Other parts of the offering were intended for permanent use, as utensils necessary in the service of the sanctuary, as an immense platter and bowl (Exodus, 25. 29), which, being of silver, were to be employed at the altar of burnt-offering, or in the court, not in the holy place, all the furniture of which was of solid or plated gold; and a golden spoon, the

contents of which show its destination to have been the altar of incense. The word rendered "spoon" means a hollow cup, in the shape of a hand, with which the priests on ordinary occasions might lift a quantity from the incense-box to throw on the altar-fire, or into the censers; but on the ceremonial on the day of the annual atonement no instrument was allowed but the high priest's own hands. (Leviticus, 16. 12.) **18. On the second, Nethaneel, prince of Issachar did offer**—This tribe being stationed on the right side of Judah, offered next through its representative; then Zebulun, which was on the left side; and so on in orderly succession, every tribe making the same kind of offering and in the same amount, to show that, as each was under equal obligation, each rendered an equal tribute. Although each offering made was the same in quantity as well as quality, a separate notice is given of each, as a separate day was appointed for the presentation, that equal honor might be conferred on each, and none appear to be overlooked or slighted. And as the sacred books were frequently read in public, posterity, in each successive age, would feel a livelier interest in the national worship, from the permanent recognition of the offerings made by the ancestors of the respective tribes. But while this was done in one respect, as subjects offering tribute to their king, it was in another respect, a purely religious act. The vessels offered were for a sacrificial use—the animals brought were clean and fit for sacrifice, both symbolically denoting, that while God was to dwell amongst them as their Sovereign, they were a holy people, who by this offering dedicated themselves to God. **48. On the seventh day**—Surprise has been expressed by some that this work of presentation was continued on the Sabbath. But assuming that the seventh day referred to was a Sabbath (which is uncertain), the work was of a directly religious character, and perfectly in accordance with the design of the sacred day. **84-88. This was the dedication of the altar**—The inspired historian here sums up the separate items detailed. The preceding narrative, and the aggregate amount, is as follows:—121 silver chargers, each weighing 130 shekels=1560; 12 silver bowls, each 70 shekels=840: total weight. A silver charger at 130 shekels, reduced to Troy weight, makes 75 oz., 9 dwts., 16 8·31 gr.; and a silver bowl at 70 shekels amounts to 40 oz., 12 dwts., 21 21·31 gr. The total weight of the 12 chargers is therefore 905 oz., 16 dwts., 3 3·11 gr., and that of the 12 bowls 487 oz., 14 dwts., 20 4·31 gr.; making the total weight of silver vessels 1393 oz., 10 dwts., 23 7·31 gr.; which, at 5s. per oz., is equal to £383, 1s. 8½d. The 12 golden spoons, allowing each to be 5 oz., 16 dwts., 3·31 gr., amount to 69 oz. 3 dwts., 13 5·31 gr., which, at £4 per oz., is equal to £320, 14s. 10½d., and added to the amount of the silver, makes a total of £703, 16s. 6½d. Besides these, the offerings comprised 12 bullocks, 12 rams, 12 lambs, 24 goats, 60 rams, 60 he-goats, 60 lambs—amounting in all to 240. So large a collection of cattle offered for sacrifice on one occasion proves both the large flocks of the Israelites and the abundance of pastures which were then, and still are found in the valleys that lie between the Sinaitic Mountains. All travellers attest the luxuriant verdure of those extensive wadys; and that they were equally or still more rich in pasturage anciently, is confirmed by the numerous flocks of the Amalekites, as well as of Nabal, which were fed in the wilderness of Paran. (1 Samuel, 15. 9.) **89. And when Moses had gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to**

**speak with him**—As a king gives private audience to his minister, so special license was granted to Moses, who, though not a priest, was admitted into the sanctuary to receive instructions from his Heavenly King as occasion demanded. **then he heard the voice of one speaking to him**—Though standing on the outer side of the vail, he could distinctly hear it, and the mention of this circumstance is important as the fulfilment, at the dedication of the tabernacle, of a special promise made by the Lord—Christ himself, the Angel of the Covenant, commanding its erection. (Exodus, 25. 22.) It was the reward of Moses' zeal and obedience; and, in like manner, to all who love Him and keep His commandments, He will manifest Himself. (John, 14. 21.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1-4. HOW THE LAMPS ARE TO BE LIGHTED. **1. The Lord spake unto Moses**—The order of this chapter suggests the idea that the following instructions were given to Moses while he was within the tabernacle of the congregation, after the princes had completed their offering. But from the tenor of the instructions, it is more likely that they were given immediately after the Levites had been given to the priests (see on chaps. 3. 4.), and that the instructions had been postponed till the narrative of other transactions in the camp had been made. [PATRICK.] **2. Speak unto Aaron, etc.**—The candlestick, which was made of one solid, massy piece of pure gold, with six lamps supported on as many branches, a seventh in the centre surmounting the shaft itself, (Exodus, 25. 31; 37. 17), and completed according to the pattern shown in the mount, was now to be lighted, when the other things in the sanctuary began to be applied to religious service. It was Aaron's personal duty, as the servant of God, to light His house, which, being without windows, required the aid of lights. (2 Peter, 1. 19.) And the course he was ordered to follow was first to light the middle lamp from the altar fire, and then the other lamps from each other—a course symbolical of all the light of heavenly truth being derived from Christ, and diffused by his ministers throughout the world. (Revelation, 4. 5.) **the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick, etc.**—The candlestick stood close to the boards of the sanctuary, on the south side, in full view of the table of show bred on the north (Exodus, 26. 35), having one set of its lamps turned towards the east, and another towards the west; so that all parts of the tabernacle were thus lighted up.

5-22. THE CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES. **Take the Levites and cleanse them**—This passage describes the consecration of the Levites. Although the tribe was to be devoted to the Divine service, their hereditary descent alone was not a sufficient qualification for entering on the duties of the sacred office. They were to be set apart by a special ceremony, which, however, was much simpler than that appointed for the priests; neither washing nor anointing, nor investiture with official robes was necessary. Their purification consisted, along with the offering of the requisite sacrifices (Leviticus, 1. 4; 3. 2; 4. 4), in being sprinkled by water mixed with the ashes of a red heifer (ch. 19. 9), and shaved all over, and their clothes washed—a combination of symbolical acts,



which was intended to remind them of the mortification of carnal and worldly desires, and the maintenance of that purity in heart and life which became the servants of God. **9. Thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together, etc.**—As it was plainly impossible that the whole multitude of the Israelites could do this, a select portion of them must be meant. This party, who laid their hands upon the Levites, are supposed by some to have been the first-born, who, by that act, transferred their peculiar privilege of acting as God's ministers to the Levitical tribe; and by others, to have been the princes, who thus blessed them. It appears, from this passage, that the imposition of hands was a ceremony used in consecrating persons to the holy offices in the ancient, as, from the example of our Lord and his apostles, it has been perpetuated in the Christian church. **11-13. Aaron shall offer the Levites**—*Heb.*, as a wave offering; and it has been thought probable that the high priest, in bringing the Levites one by one to the altar, directed them to make some simple movements of their persons, analogous to what was done at the presentation of the wave offerings before the Lord. Thus were they first devoted as an offering to God, and by him surrendered to the priests to be employed in his service. The consecration ceremonial was repeated in the case of every Levite who was taken, as at a later period was done, to assist the priests in the tabernacle and temple. (See on 2 Chronicles, 29. 34.) **14. The Levites shall be mine**—*i.e.*, exempt from all military duty or secular work—free from all pecuniary imposition; and wholly devoted to the custody and service of the sanctuary. **15. After that, the Levites shall go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation**—into the court, to assist the priests; and at removal into the tabernacle—*i.e.*, the door of it—to receive the covered furniture. **19. to make an atonement for the children of Israel, etc.**—to aid the priests in that expiatory work; or, as the words may be rendered, "to make redemption for," the Levites being exchanged or substituted for the first-born, for this important end, that there might be a sanctified body of men appointed to guard the sanctuary, and not allow the people to approach or presumptuously meddle with holy things, which would expose them to the angry judgments of heaven. **24. From twenty-five years old, etc.**—(cf. ch. 4. 3.) They entered on their work in their 25th year, as pupils and probationers, under the superintendence and direction of their senior brethren; and at 30 they were admitted to the full discharge of their official functions. **25. From the age of fifty they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, etc.**—*i.e.*, on the laborious and exhausting parts of their work. **26. But shall minister with their brethren**—in the performance of easier and lighter duties—instructing and directing the young, or superintending important trusts. "They also serve who only wait." [MILTON.]

## CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1-8. THE PASSOVER ENJOINED. **2. Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season, etc.**—The date of this command to keep the passover in the wilderness was given shortly after the erection and consecration of the tabernacle, and preceded the numbering of the people by a month. (cf. *v.*, with ch. I. 1, 2.) But it is

narrated after that transaction, in order to introduce the notice of a particular case, for which a law was provided to meet the occasion. This was the first observance of the passover since the Exodus; and, without a positive injunction, the Israelites were under no obligation to keep it till their settlement in the land of Canaan. (Exodus, 12. 25.) The anniversary was kept on the exact day of the year in which they, twelve months before, had departed from Egypt; and it was marked by all the peculiar rites—the he-lamb and the unleavened bread. The materials would be easily procured—the lambs from their numerous flocks, and the meal for the unleavened bread, by the aid of Jethro, from the land of Midian, which was adjoining their camp. (Exodus, 3. 1.) But their girded loins, their sandalled feet, and their staff in their hand, being the mere circumstances attending a hurried departure, and not essential to the rite, were not repeated. It is supposed to have been the only observance of the feast during their 40 years' wandering; and Jewish writers say that, as none could eat the passover except they were circumcised, (Exodus, 12. 43. 44, 48,) and circumcision was not practised in the wilderness, there could be no renewal of the paschal solemnity.

A SECOND PASSOVER ALLOWED.—Ver. 6-14. **There were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man**—To discharge the last offices to the remains of deceased relatives was imperative; and yet attendance on a funeral entailed ceremonial defilement, which led to exclusion from all society and from the camp for seven days. Some persons who were in this situation at the arrival of the first paschal anniversary, being painfully perplexed about the course of duty, because they were temporarily disqualified at the proper season, and having no opportunity of supplying their want, were liable to a total privation of all their privileges, laid their case before Moses. Jewish writers assert that these men were the persons who had carried out the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu. **8. Moses said unto them, Stand still, I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you**—A solution of the difficulty was soon obtained—it being enacted, by Divine authority, that to those who might be disqualified, by the occurrence of a death in his family circle, or unable by distance to keep the passover on the anniversary day, a special license was granted them of observing it by themselves on the same day and hour of the following month, under a due attendance to all the solemn formalities. (See on 2 Chronicles, 30. 2.) But the observance was imperative on all who did not labor under those impediments. **14. If a stranger shall sojourn among you and will keep the passover**—Gentile converts, or proselytes, as they were afterwards called, were admitted, if circumcised, to the same privileges as native Israelites, and were liable to excommunication if they neglected the passover. But circumcision was an indispensable condition; and whoever did not submit to that rite, were prohibited, under the sternest penalties, from eating the passover.

15-23. A CLOUD GUIDETH THE ISRAELITES. **The cloud covered the tabernacle**—The inspired historian here enters on an entirely new subject, which might properly have formed a separate chapter, beginning at this verse and ending at v. 29 of the following chapter. [CALMET.] The cloud was a visible token of God's special presence and guardian care of the Israelites. (Ex., 14. 20; Ps. 105. 39.) It was easily distinguishable from all other clouds, by its peculiar form and its fixed posi-

tion; for from the day of the completion of the tabernacle it rested by day as a dark, by night as a fiery column, on that part of the sanctuary which contained the ark of the testimony. (Leviticus, 16. 2.) **17. When the cloud was taken up**—*i.e.*, rose to a higher elevation, so as to be conspicuous at the remotest extremities of the camp. That was a signal for removal; and, accordingly, it was properly called (*v.* 18), “the commandment of the Lord.” It was a visible token of the presence of God; and from it, as a glorious throne, He gave the order. So that its motion regulated the commencement and termination of all the journeys of the Israelites. (See on Exodus, 14. 19.) **19. When the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle. . . then Israel kept the charge of the Lord and journeyed not**—A desert life has its attractions, and constant movements create a passionate love of change. Many instances show that the Israelites had strongly imbibed this nomad habit, and were desirous of hastening to Canaan. But still the phases of the cloud indicated the command of God; and whatsoever irksomeness they might have felt in remaining long stationary in camp, “when the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle many days, they kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not.” Happy for them had they always exhibited this spirit of obedience! and happy for all if, through the wilderness of this world, we implicitly follow the leadings of God’s providence and the directions of God’s word.

## CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1-36. THE USE OF THE SILVER TRUMPETS. **2. Make thee two trumpets of silver**—These trumpets were of a long form, in opposition to that of the Egyptian trumpets, with which the people were convened to the worship of Osiris, and which were curved like rams’ horns. Those which Moses made, as described by Josephus, and represented on the arch of Titus, were straight, a cubit or more in length, the tubes of the thickness of a flute, and both extremities bore a close resemblance to those in use amongst us. They were of solid silver—so as, from the purity of the metal, to give a shrill, distinct sound; and there were two of them, probably because there were only two sons of Aaron; but at a later period the number was greatly increased. (Joshua, 6. 8; 2 Chronicles, 5. 12.) And although the camp comprehended 2,500,000 of people, two trumpets would be quite sufficient, for sound is conveyed easily through the pure atmosphere, and reverberated strongly amongst the the valleys of the Sinaitic hills. **3. when they shall blow with them**—There seem to have been signals made by a difference in the loudness and variety in the notes, suited for different occasions, and which experience made the Israelites easily distinguish. A simple uniform sound by both trumpets summoned a general assembly of the people; the blast of a single trumpet convoked the princes to consult on public affairs; notes of some other kind were made to sound an alarm, whether for journeying or for war. One alarm was the recognized signal for the eastern division of the camp—*viz.*, the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun—to march; two alarms gave the signal for the southern to move; and, though it is not in our present *Heb.* text, the Septuagint has, that on three alarms being sounded, those on the west; while on four blasts those on the north decamped. Thus the greatest order and dis-

discipline were established in the Israelitish camp—no military march could be better regulated. **8. The sons of Aaron the priests shall blow with the trumpets, etc.**—Neither the Levites nor any in the common ranks of the people could be employed in this office of signal-giving. In order to attract greater attention and more faithful observance it was reserved to the priests alone, as the Lord's ministers; and as anciently in Persia and other Eastern countries, the alarm trumpets were sounded from the tent of the sovereign, so were they blown from the tabernacle, the visible residence of Israel's king. **9. If ye go to war**—In the land of Canaan, either when attacked by foreign invaders, or when they went to take possession according to the Divine promise, ye—*i.e.*, the priests—shall blow an alarm. This advice was accordingly acted upon; (ch. 31. 6; 2 Chronicles, 13. 12); and in the circumstances it was an act of devout confidence in God. A solemn and religious act on the eve of a battle has often animated the hearts of those who felt they were engaged in a good and just cause; and so the blowing of the trumpet, being an ordinance of God, produced that effect on the minds of the Israelites. But more is meant by the words—*viz.*, that God would, as it were, be aroused by the trumpet to bless with His presence and aid. **10. Also in the days of your gladness, and in your solemn days**—*i.e.*, festive and thanksgiving occasions were to be ushered in with the trumpets, as all feasts afterwards were (Psalm 81. 3; 2 Chronicles, 29. 27), to intimate the joyous and delighted feelings with which they engaged in the service of God. **11. It came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month in the second year, etc.**—The Israelites had lain encamped in Wady-Er-Rahah and the neighboring valleys of the Sinaitic range, for the space of 11 months 29 days. (cf. Exodus, 19. 1.) Besides the religious purposes of the highest importance to which their long sojourn at Sinai was subservient, the Israelites, after the hardships and oppression of the Egyptian servitude, required an interval of repose and refreshment. They were neither physically nor morally in a condition to enter the lists with the warlike people they had to encounter before obtaining possession of Canaan. But the wondrous transactions at Sinai—the arm of Jehovah so visibly displayed in their favor—the covenant entered into and the special blessings guaranteed, began a course of moral and religious education which moulded the character of this people—made them acquainted with their high destiny, and inspired them with those noble principles of Divine truth and righteousness, which alone make a great nation. **12. Wilderness of Paran**—It stretched from the base of the Sinaitic group, or from Et-Tyh, over that extensive plateau to the south-western borders of Palestine. **13-27. The children of Israel took their journey by the hand of Moses**—It is probable that Moses, on the breaking up of the encampment, stationed himself on some eminence to see the ranks defile in order through the embouchure of the mountains. The marching order is described (ch. 2.), but as the vast horde are represented here in actual migration, it may be proper to notice the extraordinary care that was taken for insuring the safe conveyance of the holy things. In the rear of Judah, which, with the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun, led the van, followed the Gershonites and Merarites with the heavy and coarser materials of the tabernacle. Next in order were set in motion the flank divisions of Reuben and Ephraim; and then came the Kohathites; who occupied the centre of the moving mass,

bearing the sacred utensils on their shoulders, and were so far behind the other portions of the Levitical body, that these would have time at the new encampment to rear the framework of the tabernacle ere the Kohathites arrived. Last of all, Dan, with the associated tribes, brought up the rearward of the immense caravan. Each tribe was marshalled under its prince or chief, and in all their movements rallied round its own standard. **29. Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite**—called also Reuel, the same as Jethro. Hobab, the son of this Midianite chief, and brother-in-law to Moses, seems to have sojourned among the Israelites during the whole period of their encampment at Sinai, and now on their removal proposed returning to his own abode. Moses urged him to remain, both for his own benefit, in a religious point of view, and from the useful services his nomad habits could enable him to render. **31. Leave us not, I pray thee. . . and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes**—The earnest importunity of Moses to secure the attendance of this man, when he enjoyed the benefit of the directing cloud, has surprised many. But it should be recollected that the guidance of the cloud, though it showed the general route to be taken through the trackless desert, would not be so minute as to point out the places where pasture, shade, and water were to be obtained, and which were often hid in obscure spots by the shifting sands. Besides, several detachments were sent off from the main body; the services of Hobab, not as a single Arab, but as a prince of a powerful clan, would have been exceedingly useful. **32. If thou go with us. . . what goodness the Lord will show unto us, the same will we do unto thee**—A strong inducement is here held out; but it seems not to have changed the young man's purpose, for he departed and settled in his own district. (See on Judges, I. 16; I Samuel, 15. 6.) **33. They departed three days' journey—i.e., the first day's progress being very small, about 18 or 20 miles. ark of the covenant went before them**—It was carried in the centre, and hence some eminent commentators think the passage should be rendered, "the ark went in their presence," the cloud above upon it being conspicuous in their eyes. But it is probable that the cloudy pillar, which, while stationary rested upon the ark, preceded them in the march—as, when in motion at one time (Exodus, 1J. 19), it is expressly said to have shifted its place. **35, 36. When the ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered**—Moses, as the organ of the people, uttered an appropriate prayer, both at the commencement and at the end of each journey. Thus all the journeys were sanctified by devotion; and so should our prayer be, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence."

## CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1-35. MANNA LOATHED. **1. When the people complained it displeased the Lord, etc.**—Unaccustomed to the fatigues of travel, and wandering into the depths of a desert, less mountainous but far more gloomy and desolate than that of Sinai, without any near prospect of the rich country that had been promised, they fell into a state of vehement discontent, which was vented at these irksome and fruitless journeyings. The displeasure of God was manifested against the ungrateful complainers, by fire sent in an extraordinary manner. It is

worthy of notice, however, that the discontent seems to have been confined to the extremities of the camp, where, in all likelihood, "the mixed multitude" had their station. At the intercession of Moses the appalling judgment ceased, and the name given to the place, "Taberah," (a burning) remained ever after a monument of national sin and punishment. (See on *v.* 34, 35.) **The mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting**—These consisted of Egyptians. To dream of banquets and plenty of animal food in the desert becomes a disease of the imagination; and to this excitement of the appetite no people are more liable than the natives of Egypt. But the Israelites participated in the same feelings, and expressed dissatisfaction with the manna on which they had heretofore been supported, in comparison with the vegetable luxuries with which they had been regaled in Egypt. **5. We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely**—See on Exodus, 7. 21. The people of Egypt are accustomed to an almost exclusive diet of fish, either fresh or sun-dried, during the hot season in April and May—the very season when the Israelites were travelling in this desert. Lower Egypt, where were the brick-kilns in which they were employed, afforded great facilities for obtaining fish in the Mediterranean, the lakes and canals of the Nile. **cucumbers**—The Egyptian species is smooth, of a cylindrical form, and about a foot in length. It is highly esteemed by the natives, and when in season, is liberally partaken of, being greatly mellowed by the influences of the sun. **melons**—the water-melons are meant, which grow on the deep loamy soil after the subsidence of the Nile; and as they afford a juicy and cooling fruit, all classes make use of them for meat, drink and medicine. **leeks**—by some said to be a species of grass cresses, which is much relished as a kind of seasoning. **onions**—the same as ours; but instead of being nauseous, and affecting the eyes, they are sweet to the taste, good for the stomach, and form to a large extent, the aliment of the laboring classes. **garlic**—is now nearly if not altogether extinct in Egypt, although it seems to have grown anciently in great abundance. The herbs now mentioned form a diet very grateful in warm countries, where vegetables and other fruits of the season are much more used than with us. We can scarcely wonder that both the Egyptian hangers-on, and the general body of the Israelites, incited by their clamors, also complained bitterly of the want of the refreshing viands in their toilsome wanderings. But after all their experience of the bounty and care of God, their vehement longing for the luxuries of Egypt was an impeachment of the Divine arrangements; and if it was the sin that beset them in the desert, it became them more strenuously to repress a rebellious spirit, as dishonoring to God, and unbecoming their relation to Him as a chosen people. **6-9. But now there is nothing but this manna**—Daily familiarity had disgusted them with the sight and taste of the monotonous food; and ungrateful for the heavenly gift, they longed for a change of fare. It may be noticed that the resemblance of the manna to coriander seed was not in the color, but in the size and figure; and from its comparison to bdellium, which is either a drop of white gum or a white pearl, we are enabled to form a better idea of it. Moreover, it is evident, from the process of baking into cakes, that it could not have been the natural manna of the Arabian desert, for that is too gummy or unctuous to admit of being ground into meal. In taste it is said (Exodus, 16. 31,) to have been like "wafers

made with honey," and here to have the taste of fresh oil. The discrepancy in these statements is only apparent; for in the former the manna is described in its raw state; in the latter after it was ground or baked. The minute description given here of its nature and use, was designed to show the great sinfulness of the people in being dissatisfied with such excellent food, furnished so plentifully and gratuitously. **10-15. Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, etc.**—It is impossible not to sympathise with his feelings, although the tone and language of his remonstrances to God cannot be justified. He was in a most distressing situation—having a mighty multitude under his care, with no means of satisfying their clamorous demands. *Their* conduct shows how deeply they had been debased and demoralized by long oppression; while *his* reveals a state of mind agonized and almost overwhelmed by a sense of the undivided responsibilities of his office. **16-17. The Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders**—(Exodus, 3. 16; 5. 6; 24. 9; 18. 21, 24; Leviticus, 4. 15). An order of seventy was to be created, either by a selection from the existing staff of elders, or by the appointment of new ones, empowered to assist him by their collective wisdom and experience in the onerous cares of government. The Jewish writers say that this was the origin of the Sanhedrim, or supreme appellate court of their nation. But there is every reason to believe that it was only a temporary expedient, adopted to meet a trying exigency. **17. I will come down**—*i.e.*, not in a visible manner, or by local descent, but by the tokens of the Divine presence and operations. **And take of the spirit which is upon thee**—The spirit means the gifts and influences of the Spirit, (ch. 27. 18; Joel, 2. 28; John, 7. 39; I Corinthians, 14. 12,) and by "taking the spirit of Moses, and putting it upon them," is not to be understood that the qualities of the great leader were to be in any degree impaired, but that the elders would be endowed with a portion of the same gifts, especially of prophecy, (*v.* 25,)—*i.e.*, an extraordinary penetration in discovering hidden, and settling difficult things. **18-20. Say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow and ye shall eat flesh**—*i.e.*, "prepare yourselves," by repentance and submission, to receive to-morrow the flesh you clamor for. But it is evident that the tenor of the language implied a severe rebuke, and that the blessing promised would prove a curse. **21-23. Moses said, The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand... shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them?**—The great leader, struck with a promise so astonishing as that of suddenly furnishing, in the midst of the desert, more than two millions of people with flesh for a whole month, betrayed an incredulous spirit, surprising in one who had witnessed so many stupendous miracles. But it is probable that it was only a feeling of the moment—at all events the incredulous doubt was uttered only to himself—and not, as afterwards, publicly and to the scandal of the people. (See on ch. 20. 10.) It was, therefore, sharply reproofed, but not punished. **24. Moses gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, etc.**—That place was chosen for the convocation, because, as it was there God manifested Himself, there His spirit would be directly imparted—there the minds of the elders themselves would be inspired with reverential awe, and their office invested with greater respect in the eyes of the people. **25. When the spirit rested**

upon them, they prophesied and did not cease—As those elders were constituted civil governors, their “prophesying” must be understood as meaning the performance of their civil and sacred duties, by the help of those extraordinary endowments they had received, and by their not “ceasing,” either that they continued to exercise their gifts uninterruptedly the first day, (see 1 Samuel, 19. 24,) or that these were permanent gifts, which qualified them in an eminent degree for discharging the duty of public magistrates. **26-29. But there remained two of the men in the camp**—They did not repair with the rest to the tabernacle, either from modesty in shrinking from the assumption of a public office, or being prevented by some ceremonial defilement. They, however, received the gifts of the Spirit as well as their brethren; and when Moses was urged to forbid their prophesying, his answer displayed a noble disinterestedness as well as zeal for the glory of God akin to that of our Lord. (Mark, 9. 39.) **31-35. There went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, etc**—These migratory birds, (see on Exodus, 16. 13,) were on their journey from Egypt, when “the wind from the Lord,” an east wind, (Psalm, 78. 26,) forcing them to change their course, wafted them over the Red Sea to the camp of Israel. **Let them fall a day’s journey**—If the journey of an individual is meant, this space might be thirty miles; if the inspired historian referred to the whole host, ten miles would be as far as they could march in one day in the sandy desert, under a vertical sun. Assuming it to be twenty miles, this immense cloud of quails (Psalm, 77. 27) covered a space of forty miles in diameter. Others reduce it to sixteen. But it is doubtful whether the measurement be from the centre or the extremities of the camp. It is evident, however, that the language describes the countless number of these quails. **as it were two cubits high**—Some have supposed that they fell on the ground above each other to that height—a supposition which would leave a vast quantity useless as food to the Israelites, who were forbidden to eat any animal that died of itself, or from which the blood was not poured out. Others think that, being exhausted with a long flight, they could not fly more than three feet above the earth, and so were easily felled or caught. A more recent explanation applies the phrase “two cubits high,” not to the accumulation of the mass, but to the size of the individual birds. Flocks of large red-legged cranes, three feet high, measuring seven feet from tip to tip, have been frequently seen on the western shores of the Gulf of Akaba, or eastern arm of the Red Sea. [STANLEY, SHUBERT.] **32. People stood up—i.e.**, rose up in eager haste—some at one time, others at another—some perhaps, through avidity, both day and night. **ten homers**—ten ass loads; or “homers” may be used indefinitely as in Exodus, 8. 14; Judges, 15. 16; and “ten” for many; so that the phrase ten homers is equivalent to great heaps. The collectors were probably one or two for each family; and, being distrustful of God’s goodness, gathered not for immediate consumption only, but for future use. In eastern and southern seas, innumerable quails are often seen, which, when weary, fall down, covering every spot on the deck and rigging of vessels; and in Egypt they come in such myriads that the people knock them down with sticks. **spread them all abroad for themselves**—salted and dried them for future use, by the simple process to which they had been accustomed in Egypt. **33. While the flesh was yet between**



their teeth, ere it was chewed—*lit.*, cut off—*i.e.*, ere the supply of quails, which lasted a month (*v.* 20) was exhausted. The probability is that their stomachs, having been long inured to manna, (a light food), were not prepared for so sudden a change of regimen—a heavy, solid diet of animal food, of which they seem to have partaken to so intemperate a degree as to produce a general surfeit, and fatal consequences. On a former occasion their murmurs for flesh were raised (Exodus, 16), because they were in want of food. Here they proceeded, not from necessity, but wanton lustful desire; and their sin, in the righteous judgment of God, was made to carry its own punishment. **34. Called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah**—*lit.*, the graves of lust, or those that lusted; so that the name of the place proves that the mortality was confined to those who had indulged inordinately. **35. Hazeroth**—the extreme southern station of this route was a watering-place in a spacious plain, now Ain Haderah.

## CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1-9. MIRIAM AND AARON'S SEDITION. **1. An Ethiopian woman**—*Heb.* A Cushite woman—Arabia was usually called in Scripture the land of Cush—its inhabitants being descendants of that son of Ham (see on Exodus, 2. 15,) and being accounted generally a vile and contemptible race. (Amos, 9. 7.) The occasion of this seditious outbreak on the part of Miriam and Aaron against Moses, was the great change made in the government by the adoption of the seventy rulers—and their irritating disparagement of his wife—who, in all probability, was Zipporah, and not a second wife he had recently married, arose from jealousy of her relatives, through whose influence the innovation had been first made, (Exodus, 18,) while they were overlooked or neglected. Miriam is mentioned before Aaron as being the chief instigator and leader of the sedition. **2. Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us?**—The prophetic name and character was bestowed upon Aaron, (Exodus, 4. 15, 16,) and Miriam. (Exodus, 15. 20); and, therefore, they considered the conduct of Moses, in exercising an exclusive authority in this matter, as an encroachment on their rights. (Micah, 6. 4.) **3. The man Moses was very meek**—(Exodus, 14. 13; 32. 12, 13; ch. 14. 13; 21. 7; Deuteronomy, 9. 18.) This observation might have been made to account for Moses taking no notice of their angry reproaches, and for God's interposing so speedily for the vindication of His servant's cause. The circumstance of Moses recording an eulogium on a distinguishing excellence of his own character is not without a parallel among the sacred writers, when forced to it by the insolence and contempt of opponents. (2 Corinthians, 11. 5; 12. 11, 12.) But it is not improbable that, as this verse appears to be a parenthesis, it may have been inserted as a gloss by Ezra or some later prophet. Others instead of "very meek," suggest "very afflicted" as the proper rendering. **4. The Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam**—The divine interposition was made thus openly and immediately, in order to suppress the sedition, and prevent its spreading amongst the people. **5. The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle**—without

gaining admission as was the usual privilege of Aaron, though it was denied to all other men and women. This public exclusion was designed to be a token of the divine displeasure. **6. Hear now my words**—A difference of degree is here distinctly expressed in the gifts and authority even of divinely commissioned prophets. Moses having been set over all God's house, *i.e.*, His church and people, was consequently invested with supremacy over Miriam and Aaron also, and privileged beyond all others by direct and clear manifestations of the presence and will of God. **8. With him will I speak mouth to mouth**—immediately, not by an interpreter, nor by visionary symbols presented to his fancy. **apparently**—plainly and surely. **not in dark speeches**—parables or similitudes. **the similitude of the Lord shall he behold**—not the face or essence of God, who is invisible (Exodus, 33. 20; Colossians, 1. 15; John, 1. 18); but some unmistakeable evidence of his glorious presence. (Exodus, 33. 2; 34. 5.) The latter clause should have been conjoined with the preceding one, thus, "not in dark speeches, and in a figure shall he behold the Lord." This slight change in the punctuation removes all appearance of contradiction to Deuteronomy, 4. 15.

10-16. HER LEPROSY. **10. the cloud departed from the tabernacle**—*i.e.*, from the door to resume its permanent position over the mercy-seat. **Miriam became leprous**—This malady in its most malignant form (Exodus, 4. 6; 2 Kings, 5. 27), as its color, combined with its sudden appearance proved, was inflicted as a divine judgment; and she was made the victim, either from her extreme violence, or because the leprosy on Aaron would have interrupted or dishonored the holy service. **11-13.** On the humble and penitential submission of Aaron, Moses interceded for both the offenders, especially for Miriam, who was restored; not, however, till she had been made, by her exclusion, a public example. **14. Her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?**—The Jews, in common with all people in the east, seem to have had an intense abhorrence of spitting, and for a parent to express his displeasure by doing so on the person of one of his children, or even on the ground in his presence, separated that child as unclean from society for seven days. **15. The people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again**—Either not to crush her by a sentence of overwhelming severity, or not to expose her, being a prophetess, to popular contempt. **16. Pitched in the wilderness of Paran**—The station of encampment seems to have been Rithma. (ch. 33. 19.)

## CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1-35. THE NAMES OF THE MEN WHO WERE SENT TO SEARCH THE LAND. **1, 2. The Lord spake unto Moses, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan**—(cf. Deuteronomy, 1. 23) whence it appears, that while the proposal of delegating confidential men from each tribe to explore the land of Canaan emanated from the people who petitioned for it, the measure received the special sanction of God, who granted their request at once as a trial, and a punishment of their distrust. **3. These men were heads of the children of Israel**—Not the princes who are named (ch. 10), but chiefs, leading men, though not of the first rank. **16. Oshea**—*i.e.*, a desire of salvation. Jehoshua, by

prefixing the name of God, means "divinely appointed," "head of salvation," "Saviour," the same as Jesus. **17. Get you up this way, and go up into the mountain**—Mount Seir (Deuteronomy, i. 2), which lay directly from Sinai across the wilderness of Paran, in a north-easterly direction into the southern parts of the promised land. **20. Now the time was the time of the first-ripe grapes**—This was in August, when the first clusters are gathered, the second in September, and the third in October. The spies' absence for a period of forty days, determines the grapes they brought from Eshcol to have been of the second period. **21-24. So they searched the land**—Their advances from south to north, reconnoitring the whole land. **the wilderness of Zin**—a long level plain, or deep valley of sand—the monotony of which is relieved by a few tamarisk and rethem trees, and which, under the names of El Ghor and El Araba, forms the continuation of the Jordan valley, extending from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba. **Rehob**—or, Beth-rehob; was a city and district situated, according to some, eastward of Sidon and, according to others, is the same as El Hule, an extensive and fertile champaign country, at the foot of Antilibanus, a few leagues below Paneas. **as men come unto Hamath**—or, "the entering in of Hamath" (2 Kings, 14. 25), now the valley of Balbeck, a mountain-pass or opening in the northern frontier, which formed the extreme limit in that direction of the inheritance of Israel. From the mention of these places, the route of the scouts appears to have been along the course of the Jordan in their advance, and their return was by the western border, through the territories of the Sidonians and Philistines. **22. Unto Hebron**—situated in the heart of the mountains of Judah, in the southern extremity of Palestine. The town or "cities of Hebron," as it is expressed in the *Heb.*, consists of a number of sheikdoms distinct from each other, standing at the foot of one of those hills that form a bowl round and enclose it. "The children of Anak," mentioned in this verse, seem to have been also chiefs of townships; and this coincidence of polity, existing in ages so distant from each other, is remarkable. [VERE MONRO.] Hebron (Kirjath-Arba, Genesis, 23. 2) was one of the oldest cities in the world. **Zoan** (the Tanis of the Greeks)—was situated on one of the eastern branches of the Nile, near the lake Menzala, and the early royal residence of the Pharaohs, that boasted a higher antiquity than any other city in Egypt. Its name, which signifies flat and level, is descriptive of its situation in the low grounds of the Delta. **23. They came unto the brook of Eshcol**—*i.e.*, "the torrent of the cluster." Its situation was a little to the south-west of Hebron. The valley and its sloping hills are still covered with vineyards, the character of whose fruit corresponds to its ancient celebrity. **and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes**—The grapes reared in this locality are still as magnificent as formerly—they are said by one to be equal in size to prunes, and compared by another to a man's thumb. One cluster sometimes weighs 10 or 12 pounds. The mode of carrying the cluster cut down by the spies, though not necessary from its weight, was evidently adopted to preserve it entire as a specimen of the productions of the promised land; and the impression made by the sight of it would be all the greater that the Israelites were familiar only with the scanty vines and small grapes of Egypt. **26. They came to Kadesh**—an important encampment of the Israelites. But its exact situation is not certainly

known, nor is it determined whether it is the same or a different place from Kadesh-barnea. It is supposed to be identical with Ain-el-Weibeh, a famous spring on the eastern side of the desert [ROBINSON], and also with Petra. [STANLEY.] **27, 28. They told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey**—The report was given publicly in the audience of the people and it was artfully arranged to begin their narrative with commendations of the natural fertility of the country, in order that their subsequent slanders might the more readily receive credit. **29. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south**—Their territory lay between the Dead and Red Seas, skirting the borders of Canaan. **Hittites dwell in the mountains**—Their settlements were in the southern and mountainous part of Palestine. (Genesis, 23. 7.) **The Canaanites dwell by the sea**—The remnant of the original inhabitants, who had been dispossessed by the Philistines, were divided into two nomadic hordes—one settled eastward near the Jordan; the other westward, by the Mediterranean. **32. A land that eateth up the inhabitants**—*i.e.*, an unhealthy climate and country. Jewish writers say that in the course of their travels they saw a great many funerals, vast numbers of the Canaanites being cut off at that time, in the providence of God, by a plague or the hornet. (Joshua, 24. 12.) **men of great stature**—This was evidently a false and exaggerated report, representing, from timidity or malicious artifice, what was true of a few as descriptive of the people generally. **33. there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak**—The name is derived from the son of Arba—a great man among the Arabians (Joshua, 15. 14), who probably obtained his appellation from wearing a splendid collar or chain round his neck, as the word imports. The epithet “giant” evidently refers here to stature. (See on Genesis, 6. 4.) And it is probable the Anakims were a distinguished family, or perhaps a select body of warriors, chosen for their extraordinary size. **we were in our own sight as grasshoppers**—a strong Orientalism, by which the treacherous spies gave an exaggerated report of the physical strength of the people of Canaan.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1-45. THE PEOPLE MURMUR AT THE SPIES' REPORT. **1. All the congregation lifted up their voice and cried**—Not literally the whole, for there were some exceptions. **2-4. Would God that we had died in Egypt**—Such insolence to their generous leaders, and such base ingratitude to God, show the deep degradation of the Israelites, and the absolute necessity of the decree that debarred that generation from entering the promised land. They were punished by their wishes being granted to die in that wilderness. A leader to re-conduct them to Egypt is spoken of (Nehemiah, 9. 17) as actually nominated. The sinfulness and insane folly of their conduct are almost incredible. Their conduct, however, is paralleled by too many amongst ourselves, who shrink from the smallest difficulties, and rather remain slaves to sin than resolutely try to surmount the obstacles that lie in their way to the Canaan above. **5. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces**—as humble and earnest suppliants—either to the people, entreating them to desist from so perverse

a design;—or rather, to God, as the usual and only refuge from the violence of that tumultuous and stiff-necked rabble, and a hopeful means of softening and impressing their hearts. **6. Joshua and Caleb, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes**—the two honest spies testified their grief and horror, in the strongest manner, at the mutiny against Moses and the blasphemy against God; while at the same time they endeavored, by a truthful statement, to persuade the people of the ease with which they might obtain possession of so desirable a country, provided they did not, by their rebellion and ingratitude, provoke God to abandon them. **8. A land flowing with milk and honey**—a general expression, descriptive of a rich and fertile country; but the two articles specified were amongst the principal products of the Holy Land. **9. Their defence is departed**—*Heb.*, their shadow. The Sultan of Turkey and the Schah of Persia are called “the shadow of God,” “the refuge of the world.” So that the meaning of the phrase, “their defence is departed” from them, is, that the favor of God were now lost to those whose iniquities were full (Genesis, 15. 16), and transferred to the Israelites. **10. The glory of the Lord appeared**—It was seasonably manifested on this great emergency to rescue His ambassadors from their perilous situation. **11. The Lord said... I will smite them with the pestilence**—Not a final decree, but a threatening, suspended, as appeared from the issue, on the intercession of Moses, and the repentance of Israel. **17. Let the power of my Lord be great**—be magnified. **21. All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord**—This promise, in its full acceptance, remains to be verified by the eventual and universal prevalence of Christianity in the world. But the terms were used restrictively in respect of the occasion, to the report which would spread over all the land of the “terrible things in righteousness” which God would do in the infliction of the doom described, to which that rebellious race were now consigned. **ten times**—very frequently. **22. my servant Caleb**—Joshua was also excepted, but he is not named, because he was no longer in the ranks of the people, being a constant attendant on Moses. **24. because he had another spirit, and hath followed me fully**—under the influence of God’s Spirit, was a man of bold, generous, heroic courage, above worldly anxieties and fears. **25. Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley**—*i.e.*, on the other side of the Idumean mountain, at whose base they were then encamped. Those nomad tribes had at that time occupied it with a determination to oppose the further progress of the Hebrew people. Hence the command to seek a safe and timely retreat into the desert, to escape the pursuit of those resolute enemies, to whom, with their wives and children, they would fall a helpless prey, because they had forfeited the presence and protection of God. The 25th verse forms an important part of the narrative, and should be freed from the parenthetical form which our English translators have given it. **30. Save Caleb and Joshua**—These are specially mentioned, as honorable exceptions to the rest of the scouts, and also as the future leaders of the people. But it appears that some of the old generation did not join in the mutinous murmuring, including in that number the whole order of the priests. (Joshua, 14. 1.) **35. ye shall know my breach of promise**—*i.e.*, that in consequence of your violation of the covenant betwixt you and me, by breaking the terms of it, it shall be null and void on my part, as I

shall withhold the blessings I promised in that covenant to confer on you on condition of your obedience. **36-38. the men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord**—Ten of the spies were struck dead on the spot,—either by the pestilence, or some other judgment,—the great and appalling mortality occasioned, by which clearly betokened the hand of the Lord. **40-45. They rose up early in the morning, and gat them to the top of the mountain**—Notwithstanding the tidings that Moses communicated, and which diffused a general feeling of melancholy and grief throughout the camp, the impression was of very brief continuance. They rushed from one extreme of rashness and perversity to another, and the obstinacy of their rebellious spirit was evinced by their active preparations to ascend the hill, notwithstanding the divine warning they had received not to undertake that enterprise. **for we have sinned**—*i.e.*, sensible of our sin, we now repent of it, and are eager to do as Caleb and Joshua exhorted us—or, as some render it, *though* we have sinned, we trust God will yet give us the land of promise. The entreaties of their prudent and pious leader, who represented to them that their enemies, scaling the other side of the valley, would post themselves on the top of the hill before them, were disregarded. How strangely perverse the conduct of the Israelites, who, shortly before, were afraid that, though their Almighty King was with them, they could not get possession of the land; and yet now they act still more foolishly in supposing, that though God were not with them, they could expel the inhabitants by their unaided efforts. The consequences were such as might have been anticipated. The Amalekites and Canaanites, who had been lying in ambuscade expecting their movement, rushed down upon them from the heights, and became the instruments of punishing their guilty rebellion. **even unto Hormah**—The name was afterwards given to that place in memory of the immense slaughter of the Israelites on this occasion.

## CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1-41. THE LAW OF SUNDRY OFFERINGS. **1, 2. The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel**—Some infer from *v.* 23, that the date of this communication must be fixed towards the close of the wanderings in the wilderness; and, also, that all the sacrifices prescribed in the law were to be offered only after the settlement in Canaan. **3. Make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt-offering**—It is evident that a peace-offering is referred to, because this term is frequently used in such a sense (Exodus, 18. 12; Leviticus, 17. 5). **4. tenth deal**—*i.e.*, an omer, the tenth part of an ephah. (Exodus, 16. 36). **Fourth part of an hin of oil**—This element shews it to have been different from such meat-offerings as were made by themselves, and not merely accompaniments of other sacrifices. **6-12. two tenth deals**—The quantity of flour was increased, because the sacrifice was of superior value to the former. The accessory sacrifices were always increased in proportion to the greater worth and magnitude of its principal. **13-16. a stranger**—one who had become a proselyte. There was not any of the national privileges of the Israelites, with hardly an exception, in which the Gentile stranger might not, on conforming to

certain conditions, fully participate. **19. when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering**—The offering prescribed was to precede the act of eating. **unto the Lord**—*i.e.*, the priests of the Lord. (Ezekiel, 44. 30.) **20. heave offering of the threshing-floor**—meaning the corn on the threshing-floor—*i.e.*, after harvest. **so shall ye heave it**—to the priests accompanying the ceremony with the same rites. **22. if ye have erred and not observed all these commandments, etc.**—respecting the performance of divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies that constitute the holy service. The law relates only to any omission, and consequently is quite different from *that* laid down (Leviticus, 4. 14), which implies a transgression or positive neglect of some observances required. *This* law relates to private parties, or individual tribes; *that* to the whole congregation of Israel. **24-26. if ought be committed by ignorance**—The Mosaic ritual was complicated, and the ceremonies to be gone through in the various instances of purification which are specified, would expose a worshipper, through ignorance, to the risk of omitting or neglecting some of them. This law included the stranger in the number of those for whom the sacrifice was offered for the sin of general ignorance. **27-29. if any soul sin through ignorance**—Not only in common with the general body of the people, but his personal sins were to be expiated in the same manner. **30. the soul that doeth ought presumptuously**—Heb., *with a high or uplifted hand*—*i.e.*, knowingly, wilfully, obstinately. In this sense, the phraseology occurs. (Exodus, 14. 8; Leviticus, 26. 21; Psalm 19. 13.) **the same reproacheth the Lord**—sets Him at open defiance, and dishonors His majesty. **31. his iniquity shall be upon him**—*i.e.*, the punishment of his sins shall fall on himself individually; no guilt shall be incurred by the nation, unless there be a criminal carelessness in overlooking the offence. **32-34. a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath-day**—This incident is evidently narrated as an instance of presumptuous sin. The mere gathering of sticks was not a sinful act, and might be necessary for fuel to warm him, or to make ready his food. But its being done on the Sabbath altered the entire character of the action. The law of the Sabbath being a plain and positive commandment, this transgression of it was a known and wilful sin, and it was marked by several aggravations. For the deed was done with unblushing boldness in broad daylight, in open defiance of the divine authority—in flagrant inconsistency with his religious connection with Israel, as the covenant people of God; and it was an application to improper purposes of time, which God had consecrated to himself and the solemn duties of religion. The offender was brought before the rulers, who, on hearing the painful report, were at a loss to determine what ought to be done. That they should have felt any embarrassment in such a case may seem surprising, in the face of the Sabbath-law. (Exodus, 31. 14.) Their difficulty probably arose from this being the first public offence of the kind which had occurred; and the appeal might be made to remove all ground of complaint—to produce a more striking effect, and that the fate of this criminal might be a beacon to warn all Israelites in future. **35, 36. The Lord said, The man shall surely be put to death**—The Lord was king, as well as God of Israel, and the offence being a violation of the law of the realm, the Sovereign Judge gave orders that this man should be put to death, and, moreover, required the whole congregation to unite

in executing the fatal sentence. **38. bid them that they make fringes in the border of their garments**—These were narrow strips, in a wing-like form, wrapped over their shoulders, and on various parts of the attire. "Fringe," however, is the English rendering of two distinct Hebrew words—the one meaning a narrow lappet or edging, called the "hem or border" (Matthew, 23. 5; Luke, 8. 44), which, in order to make it more attractive to the eye, and consequently more serviceable to the purpose described, was covered with a riband of a blue or rather purple color; the other term signifies strings with tassels at the end, fastened to the corners of the garment. Both of these are seen on the Egyptian and Assyrian frocks; and as the Jewish people were commanded by express and repeated ordinances to have them, the fashion was rendered subservient, in their case, to awaken high and religious associations—to keep them in habitual remembrance of the divine commandments. **41. I am the Lord your God**—The import of this solemn conclusion is, that though he was displeased with them for their frequent rebellions, for which they would be doomed to forty years wandering, He would not abandon them, but continue His divine protection and care of them till they were brought into the land of promise.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1-30. THE REBELLION OF KORAH. **1, 2. Now Korah, the son of Izhar**—Izhar, the brother of Amram (Exodus, 6. 18), was the second son of Kohath, and for some reason unrecorded, he had been supplanted by a descendant of the fourth son of Kohath, who was appointed prince or chief of the Kohathites. (ch. 3. 30.) Discontent with the preferment over him of a younger relative was probably the originating cause of this seditious movement on the part of Korah. **Dathan, Abiram, and On**—These were confederate leaders in the rebellion, but On seems to have afterwards withdrawn from the conspiracy. **Took men**—The latter mentioned individuals being all sons of Reuben, the eldest of Jacob's family, had been stimulated to this insurrection on the pretext that Moses had, by an arbitrary arrangement, taken away the right of primogeniture, which had vested the hereditary dignity of the priesthood in the first born of every family, with a view of transferring the hereditary exercise of the sacred functions to a particular branch of his own house; and that this gross instance of partiality to his own relations, to the permanent detriment of others, was a sufficient ground for refusing allegiance to his government. In addition to this grievance, another cause of jealousy and dissatisfaction that rankled in the breasts of the Reubenites, was the advancement of Judah to the leadership amongst the tribes. These malcontents had been incited by the artful representations of Korah (Jude, 11), with whom the position of their camp on the south side afforded them facilities of frequent intercourse, and who, in addition to his feeling of personal wrongs, participated in their desire, if he did not originate the attempt, to recover their lost rights of primogeniture. When the conspiracy was ripe, they openly and boldly declared its object, and at the head of 250 princes, challenged Moses with an ambitious and unwarrantable usurpation of authority, especially in the appropriation of the priesthood, for they disputed the claim of Aaron



also to pre-eminence. **3. They gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron**—The assemblage seems to have been composed of the whole band of conspirators; and they grounded their complaint on the fact that the whole people being separated to the divine service (Exodus, 19. 6), were equally qualified to present offerings on the altar, and that God being graciously present amongst them, by the tabernacle and the cloud, evinced his readiness to receive sacrifices from the hand of any others as well as from theirs. **4. When Moses heard it, he fell upon his face**—This attitude of prostration indicated

not only his humble and earnest desire that God would interpose to free him from the false and odious imputation, but his strong sense of the daring sin involved in this proceeding. Whatever feelings may be entertained respecting Aaron, who had formerly headed a sedition himself, it is impossible not to sympathize with Moses in this difficult emergency. But he was a devout man, and the prudential course he adopted was probably the dictate of that heavenly wisdom with which, in answer to his prayers, he was endowed. **5-II. He spake unto Korah and all his company**—They were first addressed, not only because being a party headed by his own cousin, Moses might hope to have more influence in that

quarter, but because they were stationed near the tabernacle, and especially because an expostulation was the more weighty coming from him who was a Levite himself, and who was excluded along with his family from the priesthood. But to bring the matter to an issue, he proposed a test which would afford a decisive evidence of the divine appointment. **Even to-morrow**—*lit.*, "in the morning," the usual time of meeting in the East for the settlement of public affairs. **the Lord will show who are his . . .**

**even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him**—*i.e.*, will bear attestation to his ministry by some visible or miraculous token of his approval. **6. take your censers, Korah, and all his company, etc.**—*i.e.*, since you aspire to the priesthood, then go, perform the highest function of the office—that of offering incense; and if you are accepted—well. How magnanimous the conduct of Moses, who was

now as willing that God's people should be priests, as formerly that they should be prophets. (ch. 11. 29.) But he warned them that they were making a perilous experiment. **12-14. Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram**—in a separate interview, the ground of their mutiny being different; for while Korah murmured against the exclusive appropriation of the priesthood to Aaron and his family, they were opposed to the supremacy of Moses in civil power. They refused to obey the summons; and their refusal was grounded on the plausible pretext that their stay in the desert was prolonged for some secret and selfish purposes of the leader, who was conducting them like blind men wherever it suited him. **15. Moses was very wroth**—Though the meekest of all men, he could not restrain his indignation at these unjust and groundless charges; and the highly excited state of his feelings was evinced by the utterance of a brief exclamation in the mixed form of a prayer and an impassioned assertion of his integrity. (cf. I Samuel, 12. 3.) **And said unto the Lord, Respect not their offering**—He calls it *their* offering, because, though it was to be offered by Korah and his Levitical associates, it was the united appeal of all the mutineers for deciding the contested claims of Moses and Aaron. **16-18. Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the Lord**—*i.e.*, at "the door of the tabernacle" (*v.*

18), that the assembled people might witness the experiment, and be properly impressed by the issue. **two hundred and fifty censers**—probably the small platters, common in Egyptian families where incense was offered to household deities, and which had been among the precious things borrowed at their departure. **20-21. The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation**—Curiosity to witness the exciting spectacle attracted a vast concourse of the people, and it would seem that the popular mind had been incited to evil by the clamors of the mutineers against Moses and Aaron. There was something in their behavior very offensive to God; for after His glory had appeared—as at the installation of Aaron (Leviticus, 9. 23), so now for his confirmation in the sacred office—He bade Moses and Aaron withdraw from the assembly “that He might consume them in a moment.” **22. They fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh**—The benevolent importunity of their prayer was the more remarkable that the intercession was made for their enemies. **24-26. Speak unto the congregation... Get you up from the tabernacle**—Moses was attended in the execution of this mission by the elders. The united and urgent entreaties of so many dignified personages produced the desired effect of convincing the people of their crime, and of withdrawing them from the company of men who were doomed to destruction, lest being partakers of their sins, they should perish along with them. **27. the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram**—Korah being a Kohathite, his tent could not have been in the Reubenite camp, and it does not appear that he himself was on the spot where Dathan and Abiram stood with their families. Their attitude of defiance indicated their daring and impenitent character, equally regardless of God and man. **23-34. Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works**—The awful catastrophe of the earthquake which, as predicted by Moses, swallowed up those impious rebels in a living tomb, gave the divine attestation to the mission of Moses, and struck the spectators with solemn awe. **35. there came out a fire from the Lord**—*i.e.*, from the cloud—This seems to describe the destruction of Korah and those Levites who with him aspired to the functions of the priesthood. (See on ch. 26. 11, 58; 1 Chronicles, 6. 22, 37.) **37-39. Speak unto Eleazar**—He was selected lest the high priest might contract defilement from going among the dead carcases. **the brazen censers made broad plates to be a memorial**—The altar of burnt offerings, being made of wood, and covered with brass, this additional covering of broad plates not only rendered it doubly secure against the fire, but served as a warning-beacon to deter all from future invasions of the priesthood. **41. The children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord**—What a strange exhibition of popular prejudice and passion—to blame the leaders for saving the rebels. Yet Moses and Aaron interceded for the people—the high priest perilling his own life in doing good to that perverse race. **48. he stood between the living and the dead**—The plague seems to have begun in the extremities of the camp. Aaron, in this remarkable act, was a type of Christ.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Ver. 1-13. AARON'S ROD FLOURISHETH. **2. Speak unto the child-**

**ren of Israel**—The controversy with Moses and Aaron about the priesthood was of such a nature and magnitude as required a decisive and authoritative settlement. For the removal of all doubts, and the silencing of all murmuring in future regarding the holder of the office, a miracle was wrought of a remarkable character and permanent duration, and in the manner of performing it, all the people were made to have a direct and special interest. **take every one...princes...twelve rods**—As the princes, being the eldest sons of the chief family, and heads of their tribes, might have advanced the best claims to the priesthood, if that sacred dignity was to be shared among all the tribes, they were therefore selected, and being twelve in number—that of Joseph being counted only one—Moses was ordered to see that the name of each was inscribed—a practice borrowed from the Egyptians—upon his rod or wand of office. The name of Aaron rather than of Levi was used, as the latter name would have opened a door of controversy among the Levites; and as there was to be one rod only for the head of each tribe the express appointment of a rod for Aaron determined him to be the head of that tribe, as well as that branch or family of the tribe to which the priestly dignity should belong. These rods were to be laid in the tabernacle close to the ark (cf. *v.* 10; and Hebrews, 9. 4), where a divine token was promised that would for all time terminate the dispute. **6. the rod of Aaron was among their rods**—either one of the twelve, or, as many suppose, a thirteenth in the midst. (Hebrews, 9. 4.) The rods were of dry sticks or wands, probably old, as transmitted from one head of the family to a succeeding. **8. Moses went into the tabernacle**—being privileged to do so on this occasion by the special command of God; and he there beheld the remarkable spectacle of Aaron's rod—which, according to Josephus, was a stick of an almond tree—bearing fruit in three different stages at once—buds, blossoms, and fruit. **10. Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels**—For if, after all admonitions and judgments, seconded by miracles, the people should still rebel, they would certainly pay the penalty by death. **12, 13. Behold, we die, we perish**—An exclamation of fear, both from the remembrance of former judgments, and the apprehension of future relapses into murmuring. **cometh any thing near**—*i.e.*, nearer than he ought to do; an error into which many fall. Will the stern justice of God overtake every slight offence. We shall all be destroyed. Some, however, regard this exclamation as the symptom of a new discontent, rather than the indication of a reverential and submissive spirit. Let us fear and sin not.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1-7. THE CHARGE OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES. **1. The Lord said unto Aaron, Thou, and thy sons, and thy Father's house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary**—Security is here given to the people from the fears expressed (ch. 17. 12) by the responsibility of attending to all sacred things being devolved upon the priesthood, together with the penalties incurred through neglect; and thus the solemn responsibilities annexed to their high dignity, of having to answer not only for their own sins, but also for the sins of the people, were cal-

culated in a great measure to remove all feeling of envy at the elevation of Aaron's family, when the honor was weighed in the balance with its burdens and dangers. **2-7. thy brethren of the tribe of Levi**—The departments of the sacred office, to be filled respectively by the priests and Levites, are here assigned to each. To the priests were committed the charge of the sanctuary and the altar, while the Levites were to take care of everything else about the tabernacle. The Levites were to attend the priests as servants—bestowed on them as “gifts” to aid in the service of the tabernacle—while the high and dignified office of the priesthood was a “service of gift.” “A stranger”—*i.e.*, one, neither a priest nor a Levite, who should intrude into any department of the sacred office, should incur the penalty of death.

**8-20. THE PRIESTS' PORTION. 8-13. The Lord spake unto Aaron, I have given thee charge of my heave-offerings**—A recapitulation is made in this passage of certain perquisites specially appropriated to the maintenance of the priests. They were parts of the votive and freewill-offerings, including both meat and bread, wine and oil, and the first-fruits, which formed a large and valuable item. **14. everything devoted In Israel shall be thine**—provided it was adapted for food or consumable by use; for the gold and silver vessels that were dedicated as the spoils of victory were not given to the priests, but for the use and adornment of the sacred edifice. **19. it is a covenant of salt**—*i.e.*, a perpetual ordinance. This figurative form of expression was evidently founded on the conservative properties of salt which keeps meat from corruption, and hence it became an emblem of inviolability and permanence. It is a common phrase amongst Oriental people, who consider the eating of salt a pledge of fidelity, binding them in a covenant of friendship; and hence the partaking of the altar meats, which were appropriated to the priests on condition of their services, and of which salt formed a necessary accompaniment, was naturally called a covenant of salt (Leviticus, 2. 13).

**21-32. THE LEVITEE' PORTION. 21, 22. I have given to the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve**—Neither the priests nor the Levites were to possess any allotments of land, but to depend entirely upon Him who liberally provided for them out of His own portion; and this law was subservient to many important purposes—such as that, being exempted from the cares and labors of worldly business, they might be exclusively devoted to His service; that a bond of mutual love and attachment might be formed between the people and the Levites, who, as performing religious services for the people, derived their subsistence from them; and further, that being the more easily dispersed among the different tribes, they might be more useful in instructing and directing the people. **23. but the Levites shall do the service of the congregation; they shall bear their iniquity**—They were to be responsible for the right discharge of those duties that were assigned to them, and consequently to bear the penalty that was due to negligence or carelessness in the guardianship of the holy things. **26. the Levites. . . offer a tenth of the tithe**—Out of their own they were to pay tithes to the priests equally as the people gave to them. The best of their tithes was to be assigned to the priests, and afterwards they enjoyed the same liberty to make use of the remainder that other Israelites had of the produce of their threshing floors and wine presses. **32. ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, etc.**—Neglect

in having the best entailed sin in the use of such unhallowed food, and the holy things would be polluted by the reservation to themselves of what should be offered to God and the priests.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1-22. THE WATER OF SEPARATION. **2. This is the ordinance of the law**—An institution of a peculiar nature ordained by law for the purification of sin, and provided at the public expense, because it was for the good of the whole community. **Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, etc.**—This is the only case in which the color of the victim is specified; and it has been supposed the ordinance was designed in opposition to the superstitious notions of the Egyptians. That people never offered a vow, but they sacrificed a red bull, the greatest care being taken by their priests in examining whether it possessed the requisite characteristics, and it was an annual offering to Typhon, their evil being. By the choice, both of the sex and the color, provision was made for eradicating from the minds of the Israelites a favorite Egyptian superstition regarding two objects of their animal worship. **3. ye shall give her unto Eleazar, that he may bring her forth without the camp**—He was the second or deputy high priest, and he was selected for this duty because the execution of it entailed temporary defilement, from which the acting high priest was to be preserved with the greatest care. It was led “forth without the camp,” in accordance with the law regarding victims laden with the sins of the people, and thus typical of Christ (Hebrews, 13. 12; also Leviticus, 24. 14) The priest was to sprinkle the blood “seven times” before—*lit.*, towards or near the tabernacle, a description which seems to imply either that he carried a portion of the blood in a bason to the door of the tabernacle (Leviticus, 4. 17), or that in the act of sprinkling he turned his face towards the sacred edifice, being disqualified through the defiling influence of this operation from approaching close to it. By this attitude he indicated that he was presenting an expiatory sacrifice, for the acceptance of which he hoped, in the grace of God, by looking to the mercy-seat. Every part of it was consumed by fire, except the blood used in sprinkling, and the ingredients mixed with the ashes were the same as those employed in the sprinkling of lepers (Leviticus, 14. 4-7). It was a water of separation—*i.e.*, of “sanctification” for the people of Israel. **7. the priest shall be unclean until the even**—The ceremonies prescribed show the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, while they typify the condition of Christ when expiating our sins. (2 Corinthians, 5. 21.) **11-22. he that toucheth the dead body of any man, shall be unclean**—This law is noticed here to show the uses to which the water of separation was applied. The case of a death is one; and as in every family which sustained a bereavement, the members of the household became defiled, so in an immense population, where instances of mortality and other cases of uncleanness would be daily occurring, the water of separation must have been in constant requisition. To afford the necessary supply of the cleansing mixture, the Jewish writers say that a red heifer was sacrificed every year, and that the ashes, mingled with the sprinkling ingredients, were distributed through all the cities and towns

of Israel. **12. he shall purify himself the third day**—The necessity of applying the water on the third day is inexplicable on any natural or moral ground; and, therefore, the regulation has been generally supposed to have had a typical reference to the resurrection, on that day, of Christ, by whom His people are sanctified; while the process of ceremonial purification being extended over seven days, was intended to shew that sanctification is progressive and incomplete till the arrival of the eternal Sabbath. Every one knowingly and presumptuously neglecting to have himself sprinkled with this water was guilty of an offence which was punished by excommunication. **14. when a man dieth in a tent, etc.**—The instances adduced appear very minute and trivial; but important ends both of a religious and of a sanitary nature were promoted by carrying the idea of pollution from contact with dead bodies to so great an extent. While it would effectually prevent that Egyptianized race of Israelites imitating the superstitious custom of the Egyptians, who kept in their houses the mummied remains of their ancestors, it insured a speedy interment to all, thus not only keeping burial places at a distance, but removing from the habitations of the living the corpses of persons who died from infectious disorders, and from the open field the unburied remains of strangers and foreigners who fell in battle. **21. he that sprinkleth, and he that toucheth the water of separation, shall be unclean until even**—The opposite effects ascribed to the water of separation—of cleansing one person and defiling another—are very singular, and not capable of very satisfactory explanation. One important lesson, however, was thus taught, that its purifying efficacy was not inherent in itself, but arose from the divine appointment, as in other ordinances of religion, which are effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that administers them, but solely through the grace of God communicated thereby.

## CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1-29. THE DEATH OF MIRIAM. **1. Then came the children of Israel . . . into the desert of Zin in the first month**—*i.e.*, of the fortieth year (cf. v. 22, 23, with ch. 33. 38). In this history only the principal and most important incidents are recorded, those confined chiefly to the first or second and the last years of the journeyings in the wilderness, thence called Et-Tih. Between the last verse of the preceding and the first verse of this chapter there is a long and undescribed interval of thirty-seven years. **the people abode in Kadesh**—supposed to be what is now known as Ain El-Weibeh, three springs surrounded by palms. (See on ch. 13. 26.) It was their second arrival after an interval of thirty-eight years. (Deuteronomy, II. 16.) The old generation had nearly all died, and the new one encamped in it with the view of entering the promised land, not however as formerly on the south, but by crossing the Edomite region on the east. **Miriam died there**—four months before Aaron. **2-13. there was no water for the congregation**—There was at Kadesh a fountain, En-Mishpat (Genesis, 14. 7), and at the first encampment of the Israelites there was no want of water. It was then either partially dried up by the heat of the season, or had been exhausted by the demands of so vast a multitude. **6. Moses and Aaron**

went from the presence of the assembly—Here is a fresh ebullition of the untamed and discontented spirit of the people. The leaders fled to the precincts of the sanctuary, both as an asylum from the increasing fury of the highly-excited rabble, and as their usual refuge in seasons of perplexity and danger, to implore the direction and aid of God. **8. take the rod**—which had been deposited in the tabernacle (ch. 17. 10), the wonder-working rod by which so many miracles had been performed, sometimes called “the rod of God” (Exodus, 4. 20), sometimes Moses (v. 11), or Aaron’s rod (Exodus, 7. 12). **10. Moses said, Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock**—The conduct of the great leader on this occasion was hasty and passionate (Psalm 106. 33). He had been directed to *speak* to the rock, but he *smote it twice* in his impetuosity, thus endangering the blossoms of the rod, and instead of speaking to the *rock*, he spoke to the *people* in a fury. **11. the congregation drank, and their beasts**—Physically the water afforded the same kind of needful refreshment to both. But in a religious point of view, this, which was only a common element to the cattle, was a sacrament to the people (1 Corinthians, 10. 3, 4)—it possessed a relative sanctity imparted to it by its divine origin and use. **12. the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, etc.**—The act of Moses in smiting twice betrayed a doubt, not of the power, but of the will of God to gratify such a rebellious people, and his exclamation seems to have emanated from a spirit of incredulity akin to Sarai’s (Genesis, 18. 13). These circumstances indicate the influence of unbelief, and there might have been others unrecorded which led to so severe a chastisement. **13. this is the water of Meribah**—The word Kadesh is added to it to distinguish it from another Meribah (Exodus, 17. 7). **14-16. Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom**—The encampment at Kadesh was on the confines of the Edomite territory, through which the Israelites would have had an easy passage across the Arabah by Wady-el-Ghuweir, so that they could have continued their course around Moab, and approached Palestine by the east. [ROBERTS.] The Edomites being the descendants of Esau, and tracing their line of descent from Abraham as their common stock, were recognized by the Israelites as brethren, and a very brotherly message sent to them. **17. We will go by the king’s highway**—probably Wady-el-Ghuweir [ROBERTS], through which ran one of the great lines of road, constructed for commercial caravans, as well as for the progress of armies. The engineering necessary for carrying them over marshes or mountains, and the care requisite for protecting them from the shifting sands, led to their being under the special care of the sate. Hence the expression, “the king’s highway,” which is of great antiquity. **19. If I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it**—From the scarcity of water in the warm climates of the East, the practice of levying a tax for the use of the wells is universal; and the jealousy of the natives, in guarding the collected treasures of rain is often so great, that water cannot be procured for money. **21. Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border, etc.**—a churlish refusal obliged them to take another route. (See on chapter 21. 4; Deuteronomy, 2. 4; Judges. 11. 18; see also 1 Samuel, 14. 47; 2 Samuel, 8. 14, which describe the retribution that was taken.) **22. The children of Israel came unto mount Hor**—now Gebel Haroun, the most striking and lofty elevation in the Seir range, called emphatically

(v. 28) "the mount." It is conspicuous by its double top. **24-28. Aaron shall be gathered unto his people**—In accordance with his recent doom, he, attired in the high priest's custom, was commanded to ascend that mountain and die. But although the time of his death was hastened by the Divine displeasure as a punishment for his sins, the *manner* of his death was arranged in tenderness of love, and to do him honor at the close of his earthly service. His ascent of the mount was to afford him a last look of the camp, and a distant prospect of the promised land. The simple narrative of the solemn and impressive scene implies, though it does not describe, the pious resignation, settled faith, and inward peace of the aged pontiff. **26. Strip Aaron of his garments**—*i.e.*, his pontifical robes, in token of his resignation. (See Isaiah, 22. 20-25.) **put them on his son**—as the inauguration into his high office. Having been formally anointed with the sacred oil, that ceremony was not repeated, or, as some think, it was done on his return to the camp. **28. Aaron died on the top of the mount**—(See on Deuteronomy, 10. 6.) A tomb has been erected upon or close by the spot where he was buried. **29. When all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead**—Moses and Eleazar were the sole witnesses of his departure. According to the established law, the new high priest could not have been present at the funeral of his father, without contracting ceremonial defilement. (Leviticus, 21. 11.) But that law was dispensed with in the extraordinary circumstances; the people learnt the event not only from the recital of the two witnesses, but from their visible signs of grief and change; and this event betokened the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood. (Hebrews, 7. 12.) **They mourned for Aaron thirty days**—the usual period of public and solemn mourning. (See on Deuteronomy, 34. 8.)

## CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1-35. ISRAEL ATTACKED BY THE CANAANITES. **1. King Arad the Canaanite**—rather, the Canaanite king of Arad—an ancient town on the southernmost borders of Palestine, not far from Kadesh. A hill called Tell Arad marks the spot. **heard that Israel came by the way of the spies**—in the way or manner of spies, stealthily, or from spies sent by himself to ascertain the designs and motions of the Israelites. The Septuagint and others consider the *Heb.* word "spies" a proper name, and render it, "came by the way of Atharim towards Arad. [KENNICOTT.] **he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners**—This discomfiture was permitted to teach them to expect the conquest of Canaan not from their own wisdom and valor, but solely from the favor and help of God. (Deuteronomy, 9. 4; Psalm, 44. 3, 4.) **2, 3. Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord**—Made to feel their own weakness they implored the aid of Heaven, and in anticipation of it, *devoted* the cities of this king to future destruction. The nature and consequence of such anathemas are here described. (Leviticus, 27; Deuteronomy, 13.) This vow of extermination against Arad gave name to the place Hormah, (slaughter and destruction,) though it was not accomplished till after the passage of the Jordan. Others think Hormah the name of a town mentioned. (Joshua, 12. 14.) **4. They journeyed from Mount Hor**—On being refused the passage requested, they returned through



the Arbah, "the way of the Red Sea," to Elath, at the head of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, and thence passed up through the mountains to the eastern desert, so as to make the circuit of the land of Edom. (ch. 33. 41, 42.) **the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way**—Disappointment on finding themselves so near the confines of the promised land, without entering it—vexation at the refusal of a passage through Edom, and the absence of any Divine interposition in their favor—above all, the necessity of a retrograde journey, by a long and circuitous route through the worst parts of a sandy desert, and the dread of being plunged into new and unknown difficulties—all this produced a deep depression of spirits. But it was followed, as usually, by a gross outburst of murmuring at the scarcity of water, and of expressions of disgust at the manna. **5. Our soul loatheth this light bread**—*i.e.* bread without substance or nutritious quality. The refutation of this calumny appears in the fact, that on the strength of this food they performed for forty years so many and toilsome journeys. But they had been indulging a hope of the better and more varied fare enjoyed by a settled people; and disappointment, always the more bitter as the hope of enjoyment seems near, drove them to speak against God and against Moses. (1 Corinthians, 10. 9.) **6. The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people**—That part of the desert where the Israelites now were—near the head of the gulf of Akaba—is greatly infested with venomous reptiles of various kinds particularly lizards, which raise themselves in the air, and swing themselves from branches; and scorpions which being in the habit of lying among long grass, are particularly dangerous to the barelegged, sandalled people of the East. The only known remedy consists in sucking the wound, or, in the case of cattle, in the application of ammonia. The species of serpents that caused so great mortality amongst the Israelites cannot be ascertained. They are said to have been "fiery," an epithet applied to them either from their bright, vivid color, or the violent inflammation their bite occasioned. **7-9. The people came to Moses and said, We have sinned**—The severity of the scourge, and the appalling extent of mortality brought them to a sense of sin, and through the intercessions of Moses, which they implored, they were miraculously healed. He was directed to make the figure of a serpent in brass, to be elevated on a poll or standard, that it might be seen at the extremities of the camp, and that every bitten Israelite who looked to it might be healed. This peculiar method of cure was designed, in the first instance to show that it was the efficacy of God's power and grace, not the effect of nature or art, and also that it might be a type of the power of faith in Christ to heal all who look to Him of their sins. (John, 3. 14, 15; see also on 2 Kings, 18. 4.) **10. the children of Israel set forward**—Along the eastern frontier of the Edomites, encamping in various stations. **12. pitched in the valley**—*lit.*, the brook-valley of Zared—*i.e.*, the woody (Deuteronomy, 2. 13; Is. 15. 7; Amos, 6. 14). This torrent rises among the mountains to the east of Moab, and flowing west empties itself into the Dead Sea. Ije-Abarim is supposed to have been its ford. [CALMET.] **13. pitched on the other side of Arnon**—now El-Mojib, a deep, broad and rapid stream dividing the dominions of the Moabites and Amorites. **14. book of the wars of the Lord**—A fragment or passage is here quoted from a poem or history of the wars of the Israelites, principally with a view to decide

the position of Arnon. **Ar**—the capital of Moab. **16. from thence they went to Beer**—*i.e.*, a well. The name was probably given to it afterwards, as it is not mentioned. (ch. 33.) **17, 18. then Israel sang**—this beautiful little song was in accordance with the wants and feelings of travelling caravans in the east, where water is an occasion both of prayer and thanksgiving. From the princes using their official rods only, and not spades, it seems probable that this well was concealed by the brushwood or the sand, as is the case with many wells in Idumea still. The discovery of it was seasonable, and owing to the special interposition of God. **21-23. Israel sent messengers unto Sihon**—The rejection of their respectful and pacific message was resented—Sihon was discomfited in battle—and Israel obtained, by right of conquest, the whole of the Amorite dominions. **24. from Arnon unto the Jabbok**—now the Zurka. These rivers formed the southern and northern boundaries of his usurped territory. **for the border of Ammon was strong**—a reason stated for Sihon not being able to push his invasion further. **25. Israel dwelt in all the cities**—after exterminating the inhabitants who had been previously doomed. (Deuteronomy, 2. 34.) **26. Heshbon**—(Song 7. 4.)—situated sixteen English miles north of the Arnon, and from its ruins appears to have been a large city. **27-30. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs**—Here is given an extract from an Amorite song exultingly anticipating an extension of their conquests to Arnon. The quotation from the poem of the Amorite bard ends at verse 28. The two following verses appear to be the strains in which the Israelites expose the impotence of the usurpers. **29. people of Chemosh**—the name of the Moabite idol (1 Kings, 11. 7-33; 2 Kings, 23. 13; Jeremiah, 48. 46.) **he**—*i.e.*, their god, hath surrendered his worshippers to the victorious arms of Sihon. **33. they went up by the way of Bashan**—a name given to that district from the richness of the soil—now Batanea or El-bottein—a hilly region east of the Jordan, lying between the mountains of Hermon on the north and those of Gilead on the south. **Og**—giant, an Amoritish prince, who, having opposed the progress of the Israelites, was defeated. **34. The Lord said unto Moses, Fear him not**—a necessary encouragement, for his gigantic stature (Deuteronomy, 3. 11), was calculated to inspire terror. He and all his were put to the sword.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1-20. BALAK'S FIRST MESSAGE FOR BALAAM REFUSED. **1. Israel pitched in the plains of Moab**—So called from having formerly belonged to that people, though wrested from them by Sihon. It was a dry, sunken, desert region on the east of the Jordan valley, opposite Jericho. **2. Balak**—*i.e.*, empty. Terrified (Deuteronomy, 2. 25; Exodus, 15. 15,) at the approach of so vast a multitude, and not daring to encounter them in the field, he resolved to secure their destruction by other means. **4. elders of Midian**—called kings (ch. 31. 8.) and princes (Joshua, 13. 21). The Midianites, a distinct people on the southern frontier of Moab, united with them as confederates against Israel, their common enemy. **5. he sent messengers unto Balaam**—*i.e.*, "lord" or "devourer" of people, a famous soothsayer (Joshua, 13. 22.) **son of Beer**—or, in the Chaldee form, Bosor—*i.e.*, destruction. **Pethor**—a

city of Mesopotamia, situated on the Euphrates. **6. Come, curse me, this people**—Among the heathen an opinion prevailed, that prayers for evil or curses, would be heard by the unseen powers as well as prayers for good, when offered by a prophet or priest, and accompanied by the use of certain rites. Many examples are found in the histories of the Greeks and Romans, of whole armies being devoted to destruction, and they occur among the natives of India and other heathen countries still. In the Burmese war magicians were employed to curse the British troops. **7. the elders of Moab and of Midian departed with the rewards of divination**—like the fee of a fortune-teller, and being a royal present, it would be something handsome. **8-14. lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again as the Lord shall speak unto me, etc.**—God usually revealed His will in visions and dreams; and Balaam's birth and residence in Mesopotamia, where the remains of patriarchal religion still lingered, account for the knowledge of the true God. His real character has long been a subject of discussion. Some, judging from his language, have thought him a saint; others, looking to his conduct, have described him as an irreligious charlatan; and a third class consider him a novice in the faith, who had a fear of God, but who had not acquired power over his passions." [HENGSTENBERG.]. **13. the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you**—This answer has an *appearance* of being good, but it studiously concealed the reason of the divine prohibition, and it intimated his own willingness and desire to go—if permitted. Balak despatched a second mission, which held out flattering prospects both to his avarice and his ambition. (Genesis, 31. 30). **19. tarry also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more**—The divine will, as formerly declared, not being according to his desires, he hoped by a second request, to bend it, as he had already bent his own conscience to his ruling passions of pride and covetousness. The permission granted to Balaam is in accordance with the ordinary procedure of providence. God often gives up men to follow the impulse of their own lusts; but there is no approval in thus leaving them to act at the prompting of their own wicked hearts, (Joshua, 13. 27.)

THE JOURNEY. Ver. 21-41. **21. Balaam saddled his ass**—Probably one of the white sprightly animals which persons of rank were accustomed to ride. The saddle, as usually in the East, would be nothing more than a pad, or his outer cloak. **God's anger was kindled because he went**—The displeasure arose partly from his neglecting the condition on which leave was granted him—viz., to wait till the princes of Moab "came to call him," and because, through desire for the "wages of unrighteousness," he entertained the secret purpose of acting in opposition to the solemn charge of God. **24. the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards**—The roads which lead through fields and vineyards are so narrow that in most parts a man could not pass a beast without care and caution. A stone or mud fence flanks each side of these roads, to prevent the soil being washed off by the rains. **28. the Lord opened the mouth of the ass**—To utter, like a parrot, articulate sounds, without understanding them. That this was a visionary scene, is a notion which seems inadmissible, because of the improbability of a vision being described as an actual occurrence in the middle of a plain history. Besides, the opening of the ass's mouth, must have been an

external act, and that with the manifest tenor of Peter's language, strongly favors the literal view. The absence of any surprise at such a phenomenon on the part of Balaam may be accounted for by his mind being wholly engrossed with the prospect of gain, which produced "the madness of the prophet." "It was a miracle, wrought to humble his proud heart, which had to be first subjected in the school of an ass before he was brought to attend to the voice of God speaking by the angel." [CALVIN.] **34, 35. I have sinned...if it displease thee I will get me back again**—Notwithstanding this confession, he evinced no spirit of penitence, as he speaks of desisting only from the outward act. The words "go with the men" was a mere withdrawal of further restraint, but the terms in which leave was given are more absolute and peremptory than those in *v.* 20. **36, 37. When Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him**—The higher the rank of the expected guest, politeness requires a greater distance to be gone to welcome his arrival. **38, the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak**—This appears a pious answer. It was an acknowledgment that he was restrained by a superior power. **39. Kirjath-huzoth**—a city of streets. **40. Balak offered oxen and sheep**—made preparations for a grand entertainment to Balaam and the princes of Midian. **41. High places of Baal**—eminences consecrated to the worship of Baal-peor, (*ch.* 25. 3,) or Chemosh.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. 1-30. BALAK'S SACRIFICES. **1. Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars**—Balak, being a heathen, would naturally suppose these altars were erected in honor of Baal, the patron deity of his country. It is evident from *v.* 4, that they were prepared for the worship of the true God, although in choosing the high places of Baal as their site, and rearing a number of altars, (2 Kings, 18. 22; Isaiah, 17. 8; Jeremiah, 11. 13; Hosea, 8. 11; 10 1,) instead of one only, as God had appointed, he blended his own superstitions with the divine worship. The heathen, both in ancient and modern times attached a mysterious virtue to the number *seven*; and Balaam, in ordering the preparation of so many altars, designed to mystify and delude the king. **3. stand by thy burnt offering**—as one in expectation of an important favor. **Peradventure the Lord will come to meet me; and whatsoever he showeth me**—*i.e.*, makes known to me by word or sign. **he went to an high place**—a part by himself, where he might practise rites and ceremonies, with a view to obtain a response of the oracle. **4-6. God met Balaam**—not in compliance with his incantations, but to frustrate his wicked designs, and compel him, contrary to his desires and interests, to pronounce the following benediction. **7. took up his parable**—*i.e.*, spoke under the influence of inspiration, and in the highly poetical, figurative, and oracular style of a prophet. **brought me from Aram**—This word, joined with "the mountains of the East," denotes the upper portion of Mesopotamia, lying on the east of Moab. The East enjoyed an infamous notoriety for magicians and soothsayers. (Isaiah, 2. 6.) **8. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed**—A Divine blessing has been pronounced over the posterity of Jacob; and therefore

whatever prodigies can be achieved by my charms, all magical skill, all human power, is utterly impotent to counteract the decree of God. **9. From the top**—*lit.*, “a bare place” on the rocks, to which Balak had taken him, for it was deemed necessary to see the people who were to be devoted to destruction. But that commanding prospect could contribute nothing to the accomplishment of the king's object, for the destiny of Israel was to be a distinct, peculiar people, separated from the rest of the nations in government, religion, customs, and divine protection (Deuteronomy, 33. 28.) So that although I might be able to gratify your wishes against other people, I can do nothing against them, (Exodus, 19. 5; Leviticus, 20. 24.) **10. who can count the dust of Jacob?**—An Oriental hyperbole for a very populous nation, as Jacob's posterity was promised to be. (Genesis, 13. 16; 28. 14.) **the number of the fourth part of Israel**—*i.e.*, the camp consisted of four divisions; every one of these parts was formidable in numbers. **let me die the death of the righteous**—*Heb.* of Jeshurun; or, the Israelites. The meaning is, they are a people happy above all others, not only in life, but at death, from their knowledge of the true God, and their hope through His grace. Balaam is a representative of a large class in the world who express a wish for the blessedness which Christ has promised to His people, but are averse to initiating the mind that was in Him. **13-15. Come with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them**—Surprised and disappointed at this unexpected eulogy on Israel, Balak hoped that, if seen from a different point of observation, the prophet would give utterance to different feelings; and so having made the same solemn preparations, Balaam retired, as before, to await the Divine afflatus. **he brought him into the field of Zophim . . . top of Pisgah**—a flat surface on the summit of the mountain range, which was cultivated land. Others render it “the field of sentinels,” an eminence where some of Balak's guards were posted to give signals. [CALMET.] **18. Rise up**—As Balak was already standing, (*v.* 17.) this expression is equivalent to “now attend to me.” The counsel and promises of God respecting Israel are unchangeable; and no attempt to prevail on Him to reverse them will succeed as they may with a man. **21. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob**—Many sins were observed and punished in this people. But no such universal and hopeless apostasy had as yet appeared, to induce God to abandon or destroy them. **the Lord his God is with him**—has a favor for them. **and the shout of a king is among them**—Such joyful acclamations as of a people rejoicing in the presence of a victorious prince. **22. He has as it were the strength of an unicorn**—*i.e.*, Israel is not as they were at the Exodus, a horde of poor, feeble, spiritless people, but powerful and invincible as a *reem*—*i.e.*, a rhinoceros, (Job 39. 9; Psalm, 22. 21; 92. 10.) **23. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob**—No art can ever prevail against a people who are under the shield of Omnipotence, and for whom miracles have been, and yet shall be performed, which will be a theme of admiration in succeeding ages. **26. All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do**—A remarkable confession that he was divinely constrained to give utterances different from what it was his purpose and inclination to do. **28. Balak brought Balaam to the top of Peor**—or, Beth-peor, (Deuteronomy, 3. 29.) the eminence on which a temple of Baal stood. **that looketh toward Jeshimon**—the desert tract in the south of Palestine on both sides of the Dead Sea.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 1-25. BALAAM FORETELLETH ISRAEL'S HAPPINESS. **1. To seek for**—*i.e.*, to use enchantments. His experience on the two former occasions had taught him that these superstitious accompaniments of his worship were useless, and therefore he now simply looked towards the camp of Israel, either with a secret design to curse them, or to await the Divine afflatus, **2. he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes**—*i.e.*, in the orderly distribution of the camp, (ch. 2.) **the Spirit of God came upon him**—Before the regular ministry of the prophets was instituted, God made use of various persons as the instruments through whom He revealed His will, and Balaam was one of these. (Deuteronomy, 23, 5.) **3. The man whose eyes are open**—*i.e.*, a seer, (1 Samuel, 9, 9,) a prophet to whom the visioned future was disclosed—sometimes when falling into a sleep, (Genesis, 15, 12-15,) frequently into “a trance.” **5-7. How goodly are thy tents, O Israel!**—a fine burst of admiration, expressed in highly poetical strains. All travellers describe the beauty which the circular range of Bedouin tents impart to the desert. How impressive, then, must have been the view, as seen from the heights of Abarim, of the immense camp of Israel, extended over the subjacent plains. **6. As the valley**—*Heb.* brooks, the water-courses of the mountains: **like aloes**—an aromatic shrub on the banks of his native Euphrates, the conical form of which suggested an apt resemblance to a tent. The redundant imagery of these verses depicts the humble origin, rapid progress and prosperity of Israel. **7. His king shall be higher than Agag**—The Amalekites were then the most powerful of all the desert tribes, and Agag a title common to their kings. **10-14. Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together**—The “smiting of the hands together” is, amongst Oriental people, an indication of the most violent rage, (see Ezekiel, 21, 17; 22, 13,) and ignominious dismissal. **15. He took up his parable**—or prophecy, uttered in a poetical style. **17. I shall see him**—rather, “I do see,” or “have seen him”—a prophetic sight like that of Abraham. (John, 8, 56.) **him**—*i.e.*, Israel. **there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel**—This imagery in the hieroglyphic language of the East, denotes some eminent ruler—primarily David; but secondarily and pre-eminently, the Messiah, (see on Genesis, 49, 10.) **corners**—border, often put for a whole country. (Exodus, 8, 2; Psalm 74, 17.) **children of Sheth**—some prince of Moab; or, according to some, “the children of the East.” **18. Edom shall be a possession**—This prophecy was accomplished by David, (2 Samuel, 8, 14.) **Seir**—Seen in the south, and poetically used for Edom. The double conquest of Moab and Edom is alluded to. (Psalm, 60, 8; 108, 9.) **19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion**—David, and particularly Christ. **that remaineth of the city**—those who flee from the field to fortified places. (Psalm 60, 9.) **20. Amalek... his latter end shall be that he perish for ever**—Their territory was seen at the remote extremity of the desert. (See on Exodus, 17, 14; also 1 Samuel, 15.) **21. Kenite... nest in a rock**—Though securely established among the clefts in the high rocks of En-Geddi towards the west, they should be gradually reduced by a succession of enemies, till the Assyrian invader carried them into captivity. (Judges, 1, 16; 4, 11,

16, 17; also 2 Kings, 15. 29; 17. 6.) **23. Who shall live, when God doeth this?**—few shall escape the desolation that shall send a Nebuchadnezzar to scourge all those regions. **24. Chittim**—the countries lying on the Mediterranean, particularly Greece and Italy. (Daniel, 11. 29, 30.) The Assyrians were themselves to be overthrown—first, by the Greeks, under Alexander the Great and his successors; secondly, by the Romans. **Eber**—the posterity of the Hebrews. (Genesis, 10. 24.) **he also shall perish**—*i.e.*, the conqueror of Asher and Eber, namely, the Greek and Roman empires. **25. Balaam rose up, and went to his place**—Mesopotamia, to which, however, he did not return. (See on ch. 31. 8.)

## CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 1-18. THE ISRAELITES' WHOREDOME AND IDOLATRY WITH MOAB. **1. Israel abode in Shittim**—a verdant meadow, so called from a grove of acacia trees which lined the eastern side of the Jordan. (See ch. 33. 49.) **3. Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor**—Baal was a general name for "lord," and Peor for a "mount" in Moab. The real name of the idol was Chemosh, and his rites of worship were celebrated by the grossest obscenity. In participating in this festival, then, the Israelites committed the double offence of idolatry and licentiousness. **4. The Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people and hang them up**—Israelitish criminals, who were capitally punished, were first stoned or slain, and *then* gibbeted. The persons ordered here for execution were the principal delinquents in the Baal-peor outrage—the subordinate officers, rulers of tens or hundreds. **before the Lord**—For vindicating the honor of the true God. **against the sun**—*i.e.*, as a mark of public ignominy; but they were to be removed towards sunset. (Deuteronomy, 21. 23.) **5. Judges of Israel**—the seventy elders, who were commanded not only to superintend the execution within their respective jurisdictions, but to inflict the punishment with their own hands. (See on 1 Samuel, 15. 33.) **6, 7. Behold, one of the children of Israel brought a Midianitish woman**—This flagitious act most probably occurred about the time when the order was given, and before its execution. **who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle**—some of the rulers and well-disposed persons were deploring the dreadful wickedness of the people, and supplicating the mercy of God to avert impending judgments. **the plague**—some sudden and wide-spread mortality. **9. Those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand**—Only 23,000 perished (1 Corinthians, 10. 8.) from pestilence. Moses includes those who died by the execution of the judges. **10-13. Phinehas... hath turned away my wrath**—This assurance was a signal mark of honor, that the stain of blood, instead of defiling, confirmed him in office, and that his posterity should continue as long as the national existence of Israel. **14. Zimri, a priest among the Simeonites**—The slaughter of a man of such high rank is mentioned as a proof of the undaunted zeal of Phinehas, for there might be numerous avengers of his blood. **17. Vex the Midianites, and smite them**—They seem to have been the most guilty parties. (cf. ch. 22. 4; 31. 8.) **18. They vex you with their wives**—Instead of open war they plot insidious ways of accomplishing your ruin by idolatry and corruption, their sister—their countrywoman.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Ver. 1-51. ISRAEL NUMBERED. **1. After the plague**—That terrible visitation had swept away the remnant of the old generation, to whom God swore in his wrath that they should not enter Canaan. (Psalm 95. 11.) **2. Take the sum of the congregation**—The design of this new census, after a lapse of thirty-eight years, was primarily to establish the vast multiplication of the posterity of Abraham, in spite of the severe judgments inflicted upon them; secondarily it was to preserve the distinction of families, and to make arrangements preparatory to an entrance into the promised land, for the distribution of the country according to the relative population of the tribes. **7. These are the families of the Reubenites**—the principal households, which were subdivided into numerous smaller families. Reuben had suffered great diminution by Korah's conspiracy and other outbreaks. **10. the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, together with Korah**—rather the things of Korah. (See on ch. 16. 32-35; cf. Psalm 106. 17.) **11. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not**—Either they were not parties to their father's crime, or they withdrew from it by timely repentance. His descendants became famous in the time of David, and are often mentioned in the Psalms, also 1 Chronicles, 6. 22-38. **12. The sons of Simeon**—It is supposed that this tribe had been pre-eminent in the guilt of Baal-peor, and had consequently been greatly reduced in numbers.

TRIBES.	Chap. i.	Chapter xxvi.	Incr.	Decr.
Reuben, . . . . .	46,500	43,730	—	2,770
Simeon, . . . . .	59,300	22,200	—	37,100
Gad, . . . . .	45,650	40,500	—	5,150
Judah, . . . . .	74,600	76,500	1,900	—
Issachar, . . . . .	59,400	64,300	9,900	—
Zebulun, . . . . .	57,400	60,500	3,100	—
Ephraim, . . . . .	40,500	32,500	—	8,000
Manasseh, . . . . .	32,200	52,700	20,500	—
Benjamin, . . . . .	35,400	45,600	10,200	—
Dan, . . . . .	62,700	64,400	1,700	—
Asher, . . . . .	41,500	53,400	11,900	—
Naphtali, . . . . .	53,400	45,400	—	8,000
	603,550	601,730	59,200	61,020
Total Decrease, . . . . .				1,820

Thus the justice and holiness, as well as truth and faithfulness of God, were strikingly displayed; His justice and holiness in the sweeping judgments that reduced the ranks of some tribes; while His truth and faithfulness were manifested in the extraordinary increase of others, so that the posterity of Israel continued a numerous people. **53. the land shall be divided according to the number of names**—The portion of each tribe was to be greater or less, according to its populousness.



**54. to many thou shalt give the more**—*i.e.*, to the more numerous tribes a larger allotment shall be granted. **according to those that were numbered**—*i.e.*, the number of persons twenty years old at the time of the census being made, without taking into account either the increase of those who might have attained that age, when the land should be actually distributed, or the diminution from that amount, occasioned during the war of invasion. **55. the land shall be divided by lot**—The appeal to the lot did not place the matter beyond the control of God; for it is at His disposal (Proverbs, 10. 33), and He has fixed to all the bounds of their habitation. The manner in which the lot was taken has not been recorded. But it is evident that the lot was cast for determining the quarter of the country on which each tribe should be located—not the quantity of their possessions. In other words, when the lot had decided that a particular tribe was to be settled in the north or the south, the east or the west, the extent of territory was allocated according to the rule (*v.* 54). **57. Families of the Levites**—The census of this tribe was taken separately and on a different principle from the rest. (See Exodus, 6. 16-19.) **62. Twenty and three thousand**—So that there was an increase of a thousand. (ch. 3. 39.) **males from a month old and upward**—(See on ch. 3. 15.) **64. Among these there was not a man... numbered in the wilderness of Sinai**—The statement in this verse must not be considered absolute. For, besides Caleb and Joshua, there were alive at this time Eleazar and Ithamar, and in all probability a considerable number of Levites, who had no participation in the popular defections in the wilderness. The tribe of Levi, having neither sent a spy into Canaan, nor being included in the enumeration at Sinai, must be regarded as not coming within the range of the fatal sentence; and therefore would exhibit a spectacle not to be witnessed in the other tribes of many in their ranks above sixty years of age.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Ver. I-II. THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD SUE FOR AN INHERITANCE. **4. Give us a possession among the brethren of our father**—Those young women, perceiving that the males only in families had been registered in the census, and that in consequence of none in their household, their family was omitted, made known their grievance to Moses, and the authorities conjoined with him in administering justice. The case was important; and as the peculiarity of daughters being the sole members of a family would be no unfrequent or uncommon occurrence, the law of inheritance, under Divine authority, was extended not only to meet all similar cases, but other cases also—such as when there were no children left by the proprietor, and no brothers to succeed him. A distribution of the promised land was about to be made; and it is interesting to know the legal provision made in these comparatively rare cases for preserving a patrimony from being alienated to another tribe. (See on ch. 36. 6, 7.) **3. Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of Korah**—This declaration might be necessary, because his death might have occurred about the time of that rebellion; and especially because, as the children of these conspirators were involved along with themselves in the awful punishment, their plea

appeared the more proper and forcible that their father did not die for any cause that doomed his family to lose their lives or their inheritance. **died in his own sin**—*i.e.*, by the common law of mortality to which men, through sin, are subject.

12-17. **MOSES, BEING TOLD OF HIS DEATH, SUETH FOR A SUCCESSOR.** 12. **The Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land**—Although the Israelites were now on the confines of the promised land, Moses was not privileged to cross the Jordan, but died on one of the Moabite range of mountains, to which the general name of Abarim was given. (ch. 33. 47.) The privation of this great honor was owing to the unhappy conduct he had manifested in the striking of the rock at Meribah; and while the pious leader submitted with meek acquiescence to the Divine decree, he evinced the spirit of genuine patriotism in his fervent prayers for the appointment of a worthy and competent successor. 16. **God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation**—The request was most suitably made to God in this character, as the Author of all the intellectual gifts and moral graces with which men are endowed, and who can raise up qualified persons for the most arduous duties and the most difficult situations.

18-23. **JOSHUA APPOINTED TO SUCCEED HIM.** 18. **Take Joshua . . . a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him**—A strong testimony is here borne to the personality of the Divine Spirit—the imposition of hands was an ancient ceremony. (See on Genesis, 48. 14; Leviticus, 1. 4; 1 Timothy, 4. 14.) 20. **Thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him**—In the whole history of Israel there arose no prophet or ruler in all respects like unto Moses, till the Messiah appeared, whose glory eclipsed all. But Joshua was honored and qualified in an eminent degree, through the special service of the high priest, who asked counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ver. 1-31. **OFFERINGS TO BE OBSERVED.** 2. **command the children of Israel, and say unto them**—The repetition of several laws formerly enacted, which is made in this chapter, was reasonable and necessary, not only on account of their importance and the frequent neglect of them, but because a new generation had sprung up since their first institution, and because the Israelites were about to be settled in the land where those ordinances were to be observed. **My offering and my bread**—used generally for the appointed offerings, and the import of the prescription is to enforce regularity and care in their observance. 9, 10. **This is the burnt-offering of every Sabbath**—There is no previous mention of a Sabbath burnt-offering, which was additional to the daily sacrifices. 11-15. **In the beginnings of your months ye shall offer up a burnt-offering unto the Lord**—These were held as sacred festivals; and though not possessing the character of solemn feasts, they were distinguished by the blowing of trumpets over the sacrifices (ch. 10. 10), by the suspension of all labor, except the domestic occupations of women (Amos, 8. 5), by the celebration of public worship (2 Kings, 4. 23), and by social or family feasts. (1 Samuel, 20. 5.) These observances are

not prescribed in the law, though they obtained in the practice of a later time. The beginning of the month was known, not by astronomical calculations, but, according to Jewish writers, by the testimony of messengers appointed to watch the first visible appearance of the new moon, and then the fact was announced through the whole country by signal-fires kindled on the mountain tops. The new moon festivals having been common amongst the heathen, it is probable that an important design of their institution in Israel was to give the minds of that people a better direction; and assuming this to have been one of the objects contemplated, it will account "for one of the kids being offered unto the Lord (*v.* 15), not unto the moon, as the Egyptians and Syrians did. The Sabbath and the new moon are frequently mentioned together. **16-25. In the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover**—The law for that great annual festival is given (Leviticus, 23. 5), but some details are here introduced, as certain specified offerings are prescribed to be made on each of the seven days of unleavened bread. **26-27. In the day of the first-fruits... offer the burnt-offering**—A new sacrifice is here ordered for the celebration of this festival, in addition to the other offering, which was to accompany the first-fruits. (Leviticus, 23. 18.)

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Ver. 1-40. THE OFFERING AT THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS. **1. On the seventh month**—of the ecclesiastical year, but the first month of the civil year, corresponding to our September. It was, in fact, the New-Year's Day, which had been celebrated among the Hebrew and other contemporary nations with great festivity and joy, and ushered in by a flourish of trumpets. This ordinance was designed to give a religious character to the occasion by associating it with some solemn observances. (cf. Exodus, 12. 2; Leviticus, 23. 24.) **it is a blowing of the trumpets unto you**—This made it a solemn preparation for the sacred feasts—a greater number of which were held during this month than at any other season of the year. Although the institution of this feast was described before, there is more particularity here as to what the burnt-offering should consist of, and, in addition to it, a sin-offering is prescribed. The special offerings, appointed for certain days, were not to interfere with the offerings usually requisite on these days, for in *v.* 6 it is said that the daily offerings, as well as those for the first day of the month, were to take place in their ordinary course. **7-11. Ye shall have, on the tenth day of the seventh month, an holy convocation**—This was the great day of atonement. Its institution, together with the observance to which that day was devoted, was described (Leviticus, 16. 29, 30). But additional offerings seem to be noticed, viz., the large animal sacrifice for a general expiation, which was a sweet savor unto the Lord, and the sin-offering to atone for the sins that mingled with that day's services. The prescriptions in this passage appear supplementary to the former statement in Leviticus. **12-34. On the fifteenth day**—was to be held the feast of booths or tabernacles. (See on Leviticus, 23. 34, 35.) The feast was to last seven days, the first and last of which were to be kept as Sabbaths, and a particular offering was prescribed for each day, the details of which are given with a minuteness suited to the infant state of

the Church. Two things are deserving of notice—first, that this feast was distinguished by a greater amount and variety of sacrifices than any other—partly because, occurring at the end of the year, it might be intended to supply any past deficiencies—partly because, being immediately after the in-gathering of the fruits, it ought to be a liberal acknowledgment—and partly, perhaps, because God consulted the weakness of mankind, who naturally grow weary both of the charge and labor of such services when they are long continued, and made them every day less toilsome and expensive. [PATRICK.] Secondly, it will be remarked, that the sacrifices varied in a progressive ratio of decrease every day. **after the manner**—according to the ritual order appointed by Divine authority—that for meat-offerings (*v.* 3-10), and drink-offerings. (See on ch. 28. 7, 14.) **35-40. on the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly**—The feast of tabernacles was brought to a close on the eighth day, which was the great day. (Jo. 7. 37.) Besides the common routine sacrifices, there were special offerings appointed for that day, though these were fewer than on any of the preceding days; and there were also, as was natural on that occasion, when vast multitudes were convened for a solemn religious purpose, many spontaneous gifts and services, so that there was full scope for the exercise of a devout spirit in the people, both by their obedience to the statutory offerings, and by the presentation of those which were made by free-will or in consequence of vows. **39. These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts**—From the statements made in this and the preceding chapter, it appears that the yearly offerings made to the altar at the public expense, without taking into account a vast number of voluntary vow and trespass-offerings, were calculated at the following amount:—Goats, 15; kids, 21; rams, 72; bullocks, 132; lambs, 1,101; sum total of animals sacrificed at public cost, 1,241. This, of course, is exclusive of the prodigious addition of lambs slain at the passover, which, in later times, according to Josephus, amounted in a single year to the immense number of 255,600

## CHAPTER XXX.

Ver. 1-16. VOWS ARE NOT TO BE BROKEN. **1. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded**—The subject of this chapter relates to vowing, which seems to have been an ancient usage, allowed by the law to remain; and by which some people declared their intention of offering some gift on the altar, of abstaining from particular articles of meat or drink, of observing a private fast, or doing something to the honor, or in the service of God, over and above what was authoritatively required. In *v.* 39 of the preceding chapter, mention was made of "vows and free-will offerings," and it is probable, from the explanatory nature of the rules laid down in this chapter, that these were given for the removal of doubts and difficulties which conscientious persons had felt about their obligation to perform their vows in certain circumstances that had arisen. **2. If a man vow a vow unto the Lord**—A mere secret purpose of the mind was not enough to constitute a vow; it had to be actually expressed in words; and though a purely voluntary act, yet when once the vow was made, the performance of it, like that of every other promise, became an indispensable duty—all the more that, referring

to a sacred thing, it could not be neglected without the guilt of prevarication and unfaithfulness to God. **he shall not break his word—lit.,** profane his word—render it vain and contemptible. (Psalm 55. 20; 89. 34.) But as it would frequently happen that parties would vow to do things, which were neither good in themselves nor in their power to perform, the law ordained that their natural superiors should have the right of judging as to the propriety of those vows, with discretionary power to sanction or interdict their fulfilment. Parents were to determine in the case of their children, and husbands in that of their wives;—being, however, allowed only a day for deliberation after the matter became known to them, and their judgment, if unfavorable, released the devotee from all obligation. **3. If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth—**Girls only are specified; but minors of the other sex, who resided under the paternal roof, were included, according to Jewish writers, who also consider the name "father" as comprehending all guardians of youth, and tell us that the age at which young people were deemed capable of vowing, was 13 for boys, and 12 for girls. The judgment of a father or guardian on the vow of any under his charge, might be given either by an expressed approval, or by silence, which was to be construed as approval. But in the case of a husband—who, after silence from day to day, should ultimately disapprove or hinder his wife's vow, the sin of non-performance was to be imputed to him and not to her. **9. Every vow of a widow—**In the case of a married woman, who, in the event of a separation from her husband, or of his death, returned, as was not uncommon, to her father's house, a doubt might have been entertained whether she was not, as before, subject to paternal jurisdiction, and obliged to act with the paternal consent. The law ordained that the vow was binding, if it had been made in her husband's lifetime, and he, on being made aware of it, had not interposed his veto; as, for instance, she might have vowed, when not a widow, that she would assign a proportion of her income to pious and charitable uses, of which she might repent, when actually a widow; but by this statute she was required to fulfil the obligation, provided her circumstances enabled her to redeem the pledge. The rules laid down must have been exceedingly useful for the prevention or cancelling of rash vows, as well as for giving a proper sanction to such as were legitimate in their nature, and made in a devout, reflecting spirit.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

Ver. 1-54. THE MIDIANITES SPOILED AND BALAAM SLAIN. **1, 2. The Lord spake unto Moses, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites—**a semi-nomade people, descended from Abraham and Keturah, occupying a tract of country east and south-east of Moab, which lay on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea. They seem to have been the principal instigators of the infamous scheme of seduction, planned to entrap the Israelites into the double crime of idolatry and licentiousness, by which, it was hoped, the Lord would withdraw from that people the benefit of His protection and favor. Moreover, the Midianites had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious by entering into a hostile league with the

Amorites. (Joshua, 13. 21.) The Moabites were at this time spared in consideration of Lot (Deuteronomy, 2. 9), and because the measure of their iniquities was not yet full, God spoke of avenging "the children of Israel;" Moses spoke of avenging the Lord, as dishonor had been done to God, and an injury inflicted on His people. The interests were identical. God and His people have the same cause, the same friends and assailants. This, in fact, was a religious war, undertaken by the express command of God against idolators, who had seduced the Israelites to practise their abominations. **arm yourselves**—This order was issued but a short time before the death of Moses. The announcement to him of that approaching event seems to have accelerated, rather than retarded, his warlike preparations. **5. There were delivered**—*i.e.* draughted, chosen, an equal amount from each tribe, to prevent the outbreak of mutual jealousy or strife. Considering the numerical force of the enemy, this was a small quota to furnish. But the design was to exercise their faith, and animate them to the approaching invasion of Canaan. **6. Moses sent... Eleazar the priest to the war**—Although it is not expressly mentioned, it is highly probable that Joshua was the general who conducted this war. The presence of the priest, who was always with the army (Deuteronomy, 20. 2) was necessary to preside over the Levites, who accompanied the expedition, and to inflame the courage of the combatants by his sacred services and counsels. **holy instruments**—As neither the Ark nor the Urim and Thummim were carried to the battle-field till a later period in the history of Israel, the "holy instruments" must mean the "trumpets." (ch. 10. 9.) And this view is agreeable to the text, by simply changing "and" into "even," as the *Hebrew* particle is frequently rendered. **7. they slew all the males**—This was in accordance with a Divine order in all such cases. (Deuteronomy, 20. 13.) But the destruction appears to have been only partial—limited to those who were in the neighborhood of the Hebrew camp, and who had been accomplices in the villainous plot of the Baal-peor, while a large portion of the Midianites were absent on their pastoral wanderings, or had saved themselves by flight. (cf. Judges, 6. 1.) **8. The kings of Midian**—so called, because each was possessed of absolute power within his own city or district—called also dukes or princes of Sihon (Joshua, 13. 21), having been probably subject to that Amorite ruler, as it is not uncommon in the East to find a number of governors or pachas tributary to one great king. **Zur**—father of Cozbi. (ch. 25. 15.) **Balaam also they slew with the sword**—This unprincipled man, on his dismissal from Balak, set out for his home in Mesopotamia. (ch. 24. 25.) But, either diverging from his way to tamper with the Midianites, he remained among them, without proceeding further, to incite against Israel, and to watch the effects of his wicked counsel; or, learning in his own country that the Israelites had fallen into the snare which he had laid, and which he doubted not would lead to their ruin, he had, under the impulse of insatiable greed, returned to demand his reward from the Midianites. He was an object of merited vengeance. In the immense slaughter of the Midianitish people—in the capture of their women, children, and property—and in the destruction of all their places of refuge,—the severity of a righteous God fell heavily on that base and corrupt race. But, more than all others, Balaam deserved, and got the just reward of his deeds. His conduct had been atrociously sinful, con-

sidering the knowledge he possessed, and the revelations he had received, of the will of God. For any one in his circumstances to attempt defeating the prophecies he had himself been the organ of uttering, and plotting to deprive the chosen people of the Divine favor and protection, was an act of desperate wickedness, which no language can adequately characterize. **13. Moses and Eleazar the priest went forth to meet them without the camp**—partly as a token of respect and congratulation on their victory, partly to see how they had executed the Lord's commands, and partly to prevent the defilement of the camp by the entrance of warriors stained with blood. **14-18. Moses was wroth with the officers of the host**—The displeasure of the great leader, though it appears the ebullition of a fierce and sanguinary temper, arose in reality from a pious and enlightened regard to the best interests of Israel. No order had been given for the slaughter of the women, and in ancient war they were commonly reserved for slaves. By their antecedent conduct, however, the Midianitish women had forfeited all claims to mild or merciful treatment; and the sacred character, the avowed object of the war (*v.* 2, 3), made their slaughter necessary without any special order. But why "kill every male among the little ones?" It was designed to be a war of extermination, such as God himself had ordered against the people of Canaan, whom the Midianites equalled in the enormity of their wickedness. **19-24. Abide without the camp seven days whosoever hath killed any person...purify both yourselves and your captives**—Though the Israelites had taken the field in obedience to the command of God, they had become defiled by contact with the dead. A process of purification was to be undergone, as the law required (Leviticus, 15. 13; ch. 19. 9-12), and this purifying ceremony was extended to dress, houses, tents, to every thing on which a dead body had lain, which had been touched by the blood-stained hands of the Israelitish warriors, or which had been the property of idolators. This became a standing ordinance in all time coming. (Leviticus, 6. 28; 11. 33; 15. 12.) **25-39. Take the sum of the prey that was taken**—*i.e.*, of the captives and cattle, which, having been first slumped together according to ancient usage (Exodus, 15. 9; Judges, 5. 30), were divided into two equal parts: the one to the people at large, who had sustained a common injury from the Midianites, and who were all liable to serve; and the other portion to the combatants, who, having encountered the labors and perils of war, justly received the largest share. From both parts, however, a certain deduction was taken for the sanctuary, as a thank-offering to God for preservation and for victory. The soldiers had greatly the advantage of the distribution; for a five-hundredth part only of their half went to the priest, while a fiftieth part of the congregation's half was given to the Levites. **32. the booty being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught**—Some of the captives having been killed (*v.* 17), and part of the cattle taken for the support of the army, the total amount of the booty remaining was in the following proportions:—Sheep, 675,000—half to the soldiers, 337; deducted to God, 675; half to the congregation, 337,500; deducted to the Levites, 6,750. Beeves, 72,000—half to the soldiers, 36,000; deducted to God, 72; half to congregation, 36,000; deducted to the Levites, 720. Asses, 61,000—half to the soldiers, 30,500; deducted to God, 61; half to congregation, 30,500; deducted to the Levites, 610. Persons, 32,000—half to the soldiers, 16,000;

deducted to God, 32; half to congregation, 16,000; deducted to the Levites, 320. **48-54. Officers said, there lacketh not one of us**—A victory so signal, and the glory of which was untarnished by the loss of a single Israelitish soldier, was an astonishing miracle, and so clearly betokening the direct interposition of Heaven, might well awaken the liveliest feelings of grateful acknowledgment to God, Psalm, 44. 2. 3. The oblation they brought for the Lord “was partly an atonement” or reparation for their error (*v.* 14-16), for it could not possess any expiatory virtue, and partly a tribute of gratitude for the stupendous service rendered them. It consisted of the “spoils,” which, being the acquisition of individual valor, was not divided like the “prey,” or live stock, each soldier retaining it in lieu of pay; it was offered by the “captains” alone whose pious feelings were evinced by the dedication of the spoils which fell to their share. There were jewels to the amount of 16,750 shekels, equal to £87,869. 16s. 5d. sterling.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Ver. 1-42. **THE REUBENITES AND GADITES SUE FOR AN INHERITANCE.** **1. The land of Jazer and the land of Gilead**—A complete conquest had been made of the country east of the Jordan, comprising “the land of Jazer,” which formed the southern district between the Arnon and Jabbok; “the land of Gilead,” the middle region between the Jabbok and Jarmouk, or Hieromax, including Bashan, which lay on the north of that river. The whole of this region is now called the Belka. It has always been famous for its rich and extensive pastures, and it is still the favorite resort of the Bedouin shepherds, who frequently contend for securing to their immense flocks the benefit of its luxuriant vegetation. In the camp of ancient Israel, Reuben and Gad were pre-eminently pastoral; and as these two tribes, being placed under the same standard, had frequent opportunities of conversing and arranging about their common concerns, they united in preferring a request that the Transjordanic region, so well suited to the habits of a pastoral people, might be assigned to them. **6-19. Moses said unto the children of Gad and the children of Reuben, shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here**—Their language was ambiguous—and Moses, suspicious that this proposal was an act of unbelief—a scheme of self-policy and indolence to escape the perils of warfare and live in ease and safety, addressed to them a reproachful and passionate remonstrance. Whether they had really meditated such a withdrawal from all share in the war of invasion, or the effect of their leader's expostulation was to drive them from their original purpose, they now, in answer to his impressive appeal, declared it to be their sincere intention to co-operate with their brethren; but if so, they ought to have been more explicit at first. **16. they came near**—The narrative gives a picturesque description of this scene. The suppliants had shrunk back, dreading from the undisguised emotions of their leader, that their request would be refused. But, perceiving, from the tenor of his discourse, that his objection was grounded only on the supposition that they would not cross the Jordan to assist their brethren, they became emboldened to approach him with assurances of their goodwill. **We will build sheep-folds here for our cattle, and cities for our**



**little ones**—*i.e.*, rebuild, repair. It would have been impossible within two months to found new cities, or even to re-construct those which had been razed to the ground. Those of the Amorites were not absolutely demolished, and they probably consisted only of mud-built, or dry-stone walls. **17. and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land**—There was good policy in leaving a sufficient force to protect the conquered region, lest the enemy should attempt reprisals; and as only 40,000 of the Reubenites and Gadites, and a half of Manasseh, passed over the Jordan (Joshua, 4. 13), there was left for the security of the new possessions 70,580 men, besides women and children under 20 years (cf. ch. 26. 17). **We will go armed**—*i.e.*, all of us in a collective body, or as many as may be deemed necessary, while the rest of our number shall remain at home to provide for the sustenance and secure the protection of our families and flocks (see on Joshua, 4. 12, 13). **20-33. Moses said unto them, if ye will do this thing**—with sincerity and zeal—**go before the Lord to war**—The phrase was used in allusion to the order of march in which the tribes of Reuben and Gad immediately preceded the ark (see on ch. 12. 10-77), or to the passage over the Jordan, in which the ark stood in mid-channel, while all the tribes marched by in succession (Joshua, 3. 4), of course including those of Reuben and Gad, so that, literally, they *passed over before the Lord* and before the rest of Israel (Joshua, 4. 13). Perhaps, however, the phrase is used merely in a general sense to denote their marching on an expedition, the purpose of which was blessed with the presence, and destined to promote the glory of God. The displeasure which Moses had felt on the first mention of their proposal had disappeared on the strength of their solemn assurances. But a lurking suspicion of their motives seems still to have been lingering in his mind—he continued to speak to them in an admonitory strain; and concluded by warning them that, in case of their failing to redeem their pledge, the judgments of an offended God would assuredly fall upon them. This emphatic caution against such an eventuality throws a strong doubt on the honesty of their first intentions; and yet, whether through the opposing attitude or the strong invectives of Moses, they had been brought to a better state of mind, their final reply showed that now all was right. **26-32. concerning them Moses commanded**—The arrangement itself, as well as the express terms on which he assented to it, was announced by the leader to the public authorities—*i.e.*, The pastoral country the two tribes had desired was to be granted them on condition of their lending their aid to their brethren in the approaching invasion of Canaan. If they refused, or failed to perform their promise, those possessions should be forfeited, and themselves compelled to go across the Jordan, and fight for a settlement like the rest of their brethren. **33. half the tribe of Manasseh**—It is nowhere explained in the record how they were incorporated with the two tribes, or what broke this great tribe into two parts, of which one was left to follow the fortunes of its brethren in the settled life of the western hills, while the other was allowed to wander as a nomadic tribe over the pasture lands of Gilead and Bashan. They are not mentioned as accompanying Reuben and Gad in their application to Moses, neither were they included in his first directions (*v.* 25); but as they also were a people addicted to pastoral pursuits, and possessed as immense flocks as the other two, Moses invited

the half of them to remain, in consequence, probably, of finding that this region was more than sufficient for the pastoral wants of the others, and gave them the preference, as some have conjectured, for their valorous conduct in the contests with the Amorites (cf. *v.* 39, with Joshua, 17. 1). **34-36. the children of Gad built**—(see on *v.* 16)—Dibon identified with Dheban, now in ruins, an hour's distance from the Arnon (Mojeb), **Ataroth** (crowns)—there are several towns so called in Scripture; but this one in the tribe of Gad has not been identified. **Aroer**, now **Arair**, standing on a precipice on the north bank of the Arnon. **35. Atroth, Shopan, or Zaphon**—(Joshua, 13. 27.) **Jaazer**, near a famed fountain, **Ain Hazier**, the waters of which flow into **Wady Schaib**, about 15 miles from **Hesbon**. **Beth-nimrah**, now **Nimrin**; **Heshbon**, now **Hesban**; **Elealeh** (the high), now **Elaal**; **Kirjathaim** (the double city); **Nebo**, now **Neba**, near the mountain of that name; **Baal-meon**, now **Myoun**, in ruins, where was a temple of **Baal** (Joshua, 13. 17; Jeremiah, 48. 23); **Shibmah**, or **Shebam** (*v.* 2); near **Heshbon**, famous for vines. (Isaiah, 16. 9, 10; Jeremiah, 48. 32). **their names being changed**—either because it was the general custom of conquerors to do so; or, rather, because from the prohibition to *mention the names of other Gods* (Exodus, 23. 13), as **Nebo** and **Baal** were, it was expedient on the first settlement of the Israelites to obliterate all remembrance of those idols. (See on Joshua, 13. 17-20.) **39. Gilead**—now **Jelud**. **41. Havoth-Jair**—*i.e.*, tent-villages. **Jair**, who captured them, was a descendant of **Manasseh** on the mother's side (1 Chronicles, 1. 21, 22). **42. Nobah**—also a distinguished person connected with the eastern branch of this tribe.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Ver. 1-15. TWO AND FORTY JOURNEYS OF THE ISRAELITES—FROM EGYPT TO SINAI. **1. These are the journeys of the children of Israel**—This chapter may be said to form the winding-up of the history of the travels of the Israelites through the wilderness, for the three following chapters relate to matters connected with the occupation and division of the promised land. As several apparent discrepancies will be discovered on comparing the records here given of the journeyings; from Sinai, with the detailed account of the events narrated in the book of Exodus, and the occasional notices of places that are found, in that of Deuteronomy, it is probable that this itinerary comprises a list of the *most important* stations only in their journeys; those where they formed prolonged encampments, and whence they dispersed their flocks and herds to pasture on the adjacent plains till the surrounding herbage was exhausted. The catalogue extends from their departure out of Egypt to their arrival on the plains of Moab. **went forth with their armies**—*i.e.*, a vast multitude marshalled in separate companies but regular order. **2. Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord**—The wisdom of this divine order is seen in the importance of the end to which it was subservient, viz., partly to establish the truth of the history, partly to preserve a memorial of God's marvellous interpositions on behalf of Israel, and partly to confirm their faith in the prospect of the difficult enterprise on which they were entering, the invasion of Canaan. **3. Rameses**—generally identified with

Heroopolis, now the modern Abu-Kei-sheid (see on Exodus, 12. 37), which was probably the capital of Goshen, and, by direction of Moses, the place of general rendezvous previous to their departure. **4. upon their gods**—used either according to Scripture phraseology to denote their rulers, the first-born of the king and his princes, or the idolatrous objects of Hebrew worship. **5. pitched in Succoth**—*i.e.*, booths—a place of no note except as a temporary halting place, at Birketel-Hadji, (the pilgrim's pool.) [CALMET.] **6. Etham**—edge, or border of all that part of Arabia-Petræa which lay contiguous to Egypt, and was known by the general name of Shur. **7. Pi-hiharoth, Baal-Zephon and Migdol**—(see on Exodus, 14. 1-4.) **8. Marah**—thought to be Ain-Howarah, both from its position and the time (three days) it would take them with their children and flocks to march from the waters of Ayun Musa to that spot. **9. Elim**—Supposed to be Wady Ghurundel (see on Exodus, 15. 27). **10. Encamped by the Red Sea**—The road from Wady Ghurundel leads into the interior, in consequence of a high continuous ridge which excludes all view of the sea. At the mouth of Wady-et-Tayibeh, after about three days' march, it opens again on a plain along the margin of the Red Sea. The minute accuracy of the Scripture narrative, in corresponding so exactly with the geographical features of this region, is remarkably shown in describing the Israelites as proceeding by the only practicable route that could be taken. This plain, where they encamped was the Desert of Sin. (see on Exodus, 16. 1.) **12-14. Dophkah, Alush, and Rephidim**—these three stations, in the great valleys of El-Sheikh and Feiran, would be equivalent to four days' journey for such a host. Rephidim (Exodus, 17. 6,) was in Horeb, the burnt region—a generic name for a hot mountainous country. **15. Wilderness of Sinai**—The Wady Er Raheh.

16-56. FROM SINAI TO KADESH AND PLAINS OF MOAB. **16-37. Kibroth-hattaavah**—(the graves of lust, see on ch. II, 4-34.)—The route, on breaking up the encampment at Sinai, led down the Wady Sheikh, then crossing Jebel-et-Tyh, which intersected the peninsula, they descended into Wady Zalaka, pitching successively at two brief, though memorable stations, (Deuteronomy, 9. 22,) and encamped at Hazeroth, (unwalled villages) supposed to be Ain-Hadera (ch. II. 35). Kadesh or Kadesh-barnea, is supposed to be the great valley of the Ghor, and the city Kadesh to have been situated on the border of this valley, (BURCKHARDT, ROBINSON.) But as there are no less than *eighteen stations* inserted between Hazeroth and Kadesh, and only eleven days were spent in performing that journey (Deuteronomy, 1. 2,) it is evident that the intermediate stations here recorded belong to another and totally different visit to Kadesh. The first was when they left Sinai in the second month, (ch. I. 11; ch. 13. 20,) and were in Kadesh in August (Deuteronomy, 1. 45), and "abode many days" in it, and murmuring at the report of the spies, were commanded to return into the desert "by the way of the Red Sea." The arrival at Kadesh, mentioned in this catalogue, corresponds to the *second* sojourn at that place, being the *first* month, or April, (ch. 20. 1). Between the two visits there intervened a period of thirty-eight years, during which they wandered hither and thither through all the regions of El-Tyh (wanderings), often returning to the same spots as the pastoral necessities of their flocks required; and there is the strongest reason for believing that the stations named between

Hazereth (*v.* 8), and Kadesh (*v.* 36), belong to the long interval of wandering. No certainty has yet been attained in ascertaining the *locale* of many of these stations. and there must have been more than what are recorded,—for it is probable that those only are noted where they remained some time, where the tabernacle was pitched, and where Moses and the elders encamped, the people being scattered for pasture in various directions. From Ezion-gaber, for instance, which stood at the head of the gulf of Akaba, to Kadesh, could not be much less than the whole length of the great valley of the Ghor, a distance of not less than 100 miles, whatever might be the exact situation of Kadesh; and, of course, there must have been several intervening-stations, though none are mentioned. The incidents and stages of the rest of the journey to the plains of Moab are sufficiently explicit from the preceding chapters. **Rithma**—the place of the broom, a station possibly in some wady extending westward of the Ghor, (ch. 10. 40.) **Rimmon Perez**, or Rimmon—a city of Judah and Simeon (Joshua, 15. 32.) Libnah, so called from its white poplars (Joshua, 10. 29), or, as some think, a white hill between Kadesh and Gaza (Joshua, 10. 29), Rissah (El-arish), mount Shapher, (Cassius), Moseroth, adjacent to mount Hor, in Wady Mousa. Ezion-Gaber, near Akahah, a sea-port on the western shore of the Elamitic gulf; Wilderness of Zin, on the east side of the peninsula of Sinai; Punon, in the rocky ravines of Mount Hor, and famous for the mines and quarries in its vicinity, as well as for its fruit-trees, now Tafyle, on the border of Edom; Abarim, a ridge of rugged hills, north-west of the Arnon—the part called Nebo was one of its highest peaks—opposite Jericho. (See on Deuteronomy, 10. 6.) **50-53. Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you**—not, however, by expulsion, but extermination (Deuteronomy, 7. 1). **destroy all their pictures**—obelisks for idolatrous worship (see on Leviticus, 26, 1). **and destroy all their molten images**—by metonymy for all their groves and altars, and materials of worship on the tops of hills. **54. ye shall divide the land by lot**—the particular locality of each tribe was to be determined in this manner, while a line was to be used in measuring the proportion (Joshua, 18. 10; Psalm 16. 5, 6). **55. but if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you**—No associations were to be formed with the inhabitants; otherwise, “if let remain, they will be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides,”—*i.e.*, they would prove troublesome and dangerous neighbors, enticing to idolatry and consequently depriving you of the Divine favor and blessing. The neglect of the counsel against union with the idolatrous inhabitants became fatal to them. This earnest admonition given to the Israelites in their peculiar circumstances conveys a salutary lesson to us to allow no lurking habits of sin to remain in us. That spiritual enemy must be eradicated from our present nature, otherwise it will be ruinous to our present peace, and future salvation.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

Ver. 1-29. THE BORDERS OF THE LAND OF CANAAN. **2. This is the...land of Canaan**—The details given in this chapter mark the general boundary of the inheritance of Israel west of the Jordan. The

Israelites never actually possessed all the territory comprised within these boundaries, even when it was most extended by the conquests of David and Solomon. **3-5. Your south quarter.**—The line which bounded it on the south is the most difficult to trace. According to the best Biblical geographers, the leading points here defined are as follows: The south-west angle of the southern boundary should be where the wilderness of Zin touches the border of Edom, so that the southern boundary should extend eastward from the extremity of the Dead Sea, wind round the precipitous ridge of Akrabbim (scorpions), thought to be the high and difficult pass of Safeh, which crosses the stream that flows from the south into the Jordan—*i.e.*, the great valley of the Arabah, reaching from the Dead to the Red Sea. **river of Egypt**—the ancient brook Sihor, the Rhinocolura of the Greeks, a little to the south of El-Arish, where this Wady gently descends towards the Mediterranean (Joshua, 13. 3). **6. the western border**—There is no uncertainty about this boundary, as it is universally allowed to be the Mediterranean, which is called “the great sea” in comparison with the small inland seas or lakes known to the Hebrews. **7-9. North border**—The principal difficulty in understanding the description here arises from what our translators have called Mount Hor. The Hebrew words, however, Hor-ha-hor, properly signify “the mountain of the mountain”—the high double mountain;” which, from the situation, can mean nothing else than the mountain Amana (Song 4. 8), a member of the great Lebanon range (Joshua, 13. 5). **Entrance of Hamath**—The northern plain between those mountain ranges, now the valley of Baalbeck (see on ch. 13. 21-24). **Zedad**—identified as the present Sudud (Ezekiel, 17. 15). Ziphron, (sweet odor); Hasar-Enan (village of fountains); but the places are unknown. “An imaginary line from mount Cassius, on the coast, along the northern base of Lebanon to the entering into the Bekaa (Valley of Lebanon) at the Kamosa Hermel, must be regarded as the frontier that is meant. [VAN DE VELDE.] **10-12. East Border**—This is very clearly defined. Shepham and Ribian, which were in the valley of Lebanon, are mentioned as the boundary line, which commenced a little higher than the sources of the Jordan. Ain is supposed to be the source of that river; and thence the eastern boundary extended along the Jordan, the sea of Chinnereth (Lake of Tiberias)—the Jordan; and again terminated at the Dead Sea. The line being drawn on the east of the river and the seas, included those waters within the territory of the western tribes. **13-15. The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan**—The conquered territories of Sihon and Og, lying between the Arnon and Mount Hermon, were allotted to them—that of Reuben in the most southerly part, Gad north of it, and the half Manasseh in the northernmost portion. **16-29. names of the men who shall divide the land**—This appointment by the Lord before the passage of the Jordan tended not only to animate the Israelites’ faith in the certainty of the conquest, but to prevent all subsequent dispute and discontent, which might have been dangerous in presence of the natives. The nominees were ten princes for the nine-and-a-half tribes, one of them being selected from the western section of Manasseh, and all subordinate to the great military and ecclesiastical chiefs, Joshua and Eleazar. The names are mentioned in the exact order in which the tribes obtained possession of the land, and according to *brotherly* connection.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

Ver. 1-5. **EIGHT AND FORTY CITIES GIVEN TO THE LEVITES. 2. Give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possessions. . . cities to dwell in**—As the Levites were to have no territorial domain allocated to them like the other tribes on the conquest of Canaan, they were to be distributed throughout the land in certain cities appropriated to their use; and these cities were to be surrounded by extensive suburbs. There is an apparent discrepancy between vs. 4 and 5, with regard to the extent of these suburbs; but the statements in the two verses refer to totally different things—the one to the extent of the suburbs from the walls of the city, the other to the space of 2,000 cubits from their extremity. In point of fact, there was an extent of ground, amounting to 3,000 cubits, measured from the wall of the city. One thousand were most probably occupied with out-houses for the accommodation of shepherds and other servants, with gardens, vineyards, or oliveyards. And these which were portioned out to different families (1 Chron., 6. 60) might be sold by one Levite to another, but not to any individual of another tribe (Jeremiah, 32. 7). The other two thousand cubits remained a common for the pasturing of cattle (Leviticus, 25. 34), and, considering their number, that space would be fully required.

6-8. **CITIES OF REFUGE. There shall be six cities for refuge which ye shall appoint for the manslayer**—The establishment of those privileged sanctuaries amongst the cities of the Levites is probably traceable to the idea, that they would be the most suitable and impartial judges—that their presence and counsels might calm or restrain the stormy passions of the blood-avenger—and that, from their being invested with the sacred character, they might be types of Christ, in whom sinners find a refuge from the destroyer (see Deuteronomy, 4. 43; Joshua, 20. 8). **The cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel**—The burden of furnishing those places for the residence and support of the Levitical order was to fall in equitable proportions upon the different tribes (see ch. 33. 54; Joshua, 20. 7).

9-34. **THE BLOOD-AVenger. That the Slayer may flee, which killeth any person at unawares**—The practice of Goelism—*i.e.*, of the nearest relation of an individual who was killed being bound to demand satisfaction from the author of his death, existed from a very remote antiquity (Genesis, 4. 14; 27. 45). It seems to have been an established usage in the age of Moses; and, although in a rude and imperfect state of society, it is a natural and intelligible principle of criminal jurisprudence, it is liable to many great abuses; the chief of the evils inseparable from it are, that the kinsman, who is bound in duty and honor to execute justice, will often be precipitate—little disposed, in the heat of passion, or under the impulse of revenge, to examine into the circumstances of the case, to discriminate between the premeditated purpose of the assassin and the misfortune of the unintentional homicide. Moreover, it had a tendency, not only to foster a vindictive spirit, but, in case of the Goel being unsuccessful in finding his victim, to transmit animosities and feuds against his descendants from one generation to another. This is exemplified among the Arabs in the present day. Should an Arab of one tribe happen to kill one of another tribe,

there is "blood" between the tribes, and the stain can only be wiped-off by the death of some individual of the tribes with which the offence originated. Sometimes the penalty is commuted by the payment of a stipulated number of sheep or camels. But such an equivalent, though offered, is as often refused, and blood has to be repaid only by blood. This practice of Goelism obtained among the Hebrews to such an extent that it was not perhaps expedient to abolish it; and Moses, while sanctioning its continuance, was directed, by divine authority, to make some special regulations, which tended both to prevent the unhappy consequences of sudden and personal vengeance, and, at the same time, to afford an accused person time and means of proving his innocence. This was the humane and equitable end contemplated in the institution of cities of refuge. There were to be six of these legalized asyls, three on the east of Jordan, both because the territory there was equal in length, though not in breadth, to Canaan, and because it might be more convenient for some to take refuge across the border. They were appointed for the benefit, not of the native Israelites only, but of all resident strangers. **16-21. If he smite him with an instrument of iron so that he die, etc.**—Various cases are here enumerated, in which the Goel or avenger was at liberty to take the life of the murderer, and every one of them proves a premeditated purpose. **22-28. But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, etc.**—Under the excitement of a sudden provocation, or violent passion, an injury might be inflicted issuing in death; and for a person who had thus undesignedly committed slaughter, the Levitical cities offered the benefit of full protection. Once having reached the nearest, for one or other of them was within a day's journey of all parts of the land, he was secure. But he had to "abide in it." His confinement within its walls was a wise and salutary rule, designed to shew the sanctity of human blood in God's sight, as well as to protect the man-slayer himself, whose presence and intercourse in society might have provoked the passions of deceased's relatives. But the period of his release from this confinement was not until the death of the High Priest. "That was a season of public affliction, when private sorrows were sunk or overlooked under a sense of the national calamity—and when the death of so eminent a servant of God naturally led all to serious consideration about their own mortality. The moment, however, that the refugee broke through the restraints of his confinement, and ventured beyond the precincts of the asylum, he forfeited the privilege, and, if he was discovered by his pursuer, might be slain with impunity. **29-34. These things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations**—The law of the blood-avenger, as thus established by divine authority, was a vast improvement on the ancient practice of Goelism. By the appointment of cities of refuge, the manslayer was saved, in the meantime, from the blind and impetuous fury of vindictive relatives; but he might be tried by the local court, and, if proved guilty on sufficient evidence, condemned and punished as a murderer, without the possibility of deliverance by any pecuniary satisfaction. The enactment of Moses, which was in adaptation to the character and usages of the Hebrew people, secured the double advantage of promoting the ends both of humanity and of justice.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Ver. 1-13. **THE INCONVENIENCE OF THE INHERITANCE OF DAUGHTERS.** **1. The chief fathers of the family of Gilead**—Being the tribal governors in Manasseh, they consulted Moses on a case that affected the public honor and interests of their tribe. It related once more to the daughters of Zelophehad. Formerly they had applied, at their own instance, to be recognized, for want of heirs male in their family, as entitled to inherit their father's property: now the application was made on behalf of the tribe to which they belonged—that steps might be taken to prevent the alienation of their patrimony by their alliance with husbands of another tribe. The unrestricted marriages of daughters in such circumstances threatened seriously to affect the tenure of land in Israel, as their inheritance would go to their children, who, by the father's side, would belong to another tribe, and thus lead through a complication of interests and the confusion of families, to an evil for which even the jubilee could not afford a remedy. (See on Leviticus, 25. 13.) **5-12. Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord**—The plea appeared just and reasonable; and, accordingly, an enactment was made by which the daughters of Zelophehad, while left to the free choice of their husbands, were restricted to marry not only within their own tribe, but *within the family* of their father's tribe—*i.e.*, one of their cousins. This restriction, however, was imposed only on those who were heiresses. The law was not applicable to daughters in different circumstances (1 Chronicles, 23. 22)—for they might marry into another tribe; but if they did so, they were liable to forfeit their patrimonial inheritance which, on the death of their father or brothers, went to the nearest of the family kinsmen. Here was an instance of progressive legislation (see also Exodus, ch. 18. 27) in Israel, the enactments made being suggested by circumstances; but it is deserving of special notice that those additions to, or modifications of, the law were confined to civil affairs; while the slightest change was inadmissible in the laws relating to worship, or the maintenance of religion. **13. These commandments are. . . and the judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab**—The Israelitish encampment was on an extensive plateau, north of the Arnon, and which, though wrested from the Moabites by Sihon and Og, still retained the name of its original possessors. The particular site, as indicated by the words "Jordan near Jericho," is now called El-Koura—a large plain lying not far from Nebo, between the Arnon and a small tributary stream, the Wale. [BURCKHARDT.] It was a desert plain on the eastern bank, and marked only by groves of the wild thorny acacia tree.



## THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED

## DEUTERONOMY.

## CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1-46. **MOSES' SPEECH AT THE END OF THE FORTIETH YEAR.**

**1. These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel**—The mental condition of the people generally in that infantine age of the church, and the greater number of them being of young or tender years, rendered it expedient to repeat the laws and counsels which God had given; and, accordingly to furnish a recapitulation of the leading branches of their faith and duty was amongst the last public services which Moses rendered to Israel. The scene of their delivery was on the plains of Moab, where the encampment was pitched “on this side Jordan,” or, as the Hebrew word may be rendered, “on the bank of the Jordan.” **In the wilderness, in the plain**—the Arabah, a desert plain, or steppe, extended the whole way from the Red Sea north to the Sea of Tiberias. While the high table lands of Moab were “cultivated fields,” the Jordan valley, at the foot of the mountains where Israel was encamped, was a part of the great desert plain, little more inviting than the desert of Arabia. The locale is indicated by the names of the most prominent places around it. Some of these places are unknown to us. The Hebrew word, Suph, red (for *sea*, which our translators have inserted, is not in the original, and Moses was now farther from the Red Sea than ever), probably meant a place noted for its reeds (Numbers, 21. 14). **Tophel**—identified as Tafyle or Tafelah, lying between Bozrah and Kerak. Hazeroth is a different place from that at which the Israelites encamped after leaving “the desert of Sinai.”

**2. There are eleven days' journey from Horeb**—Distances are computed in the East still by the hours or days occupied by the journey. A day's journey on foot is about twenty miles—on camels, at the rate of three miles an hour, thirty miles—and by caravans, about twenty-five miles. But the Israelites, with children and flocks, would move at a slow rate. The length of the Ghor from Ezion-geber to Kadesh is 100 miles. The days here mentioned were not necessarily successive days [ROBINSON], for the journey can be made in a much shorter period. But this mention of the *time* was made to show that the great number of years spent in travelling from Horeb to the plain of Moab was not owing to the length of the way, but to a very different cause, viz., banishment for their apostacy and frequent rebellions. **Mount Seir**—the mountainous country of Edom. **3-8. In the fortieth year . . . Moses spake unto the children of Israel, etc.**—This impressive discourse, in which Moses reviewed all that God had done for His people, was delivered about a month before his death, and after peace and tranquillity had been restored by the complete conquest of Sihon and Og. **Ashtaroth**—the royal residence of Og, so called from Astarte (the moon) the tutelary goddess of the Syrians, and he was slain at Edrei—now Edhra, the ruins of which are fourteen miles in circum-

ference [BURCKHARDT]; its general breadth is about two leagues. **5. on this side Jordan, in the land of Moab began Moses to declare this law**—declare, *i.e.*, explain this law. He follows the same method here that he elsewhere observes, *viz.*, that of first enumerating the marvellous doings of God in behalf of His people, and reminding them what an unworthy requital they had made for all his kindness—then he rehearses the law and its various precepts. **6. the Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount**—Horeb was the general name of a mountainous district—*lit.*, “the parched or burnt region,” whereas Sinai was the name appropriated to a particular peak. About a year had been spent among the recesses of that wild solitude, in laying the foundation, under the immediate direction of God, of a new and peculiar community, as to its social, political, and above all, religious character; and when this purpose had been accomplished, they were ordered to break up their encampment, in Horeb. The command given them was to march straight to Canaan, and possess it. **8. the land is before you**—*lit.*, before your faces—it is accessible—there is no impediment to your occupation. The order of the journey as indicated by the places mentioned would have led to a course of invasion, the opposite of what was eventually followed, *viz.*, from the sea-coast eastward—instead of from the Jordan westward (see on Numbers, 20. 1). **the mount of the Amorites**—The hilly tract lying next to Kadesh-barnea, in the south of Canaan. **to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon**—*i.e.*, Phœnicia, the country of Sidon, and the coast of the Mediterranean—from the Philistines to Lebanon. The name Canaanite is often used synonymously with that of Phœnician. **9-18. I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone**—a little before their arrival in Horeb. Moses addresses that new generation as the representatives of their fathers, in whose sight and hearing all the transactions he recounts took place, a reference is here made to the suggestion of Jethro (Exodus, 18. 18), and in noticing his practical adoption of a plan by which the administration of justice was committed to a select number of subordinate officers, Moses, by a beautiful allusion to the patriarchal blessing, ascribed the necessity of that memorable change in the government to the vast increase of the population. **ye are this day as the stars . . . for multitude**—This was neither an Oriental hyperbole, nor a mere empty boast, for Abraham was told (Genesis, 15. 5, 6) to look to the stars, and though they *appear* innumerable, yet those seen by the naked eye amount, in reality, to no more than 3010 in both hemispheres—so that the Israelites already far exceeded that number, being at the last census above 600,000. It was a reasonable memento, calculated to animate their faith in the accomplishment of other parts of the divine promise. **19-21. we went through all that great and terrible wilderness**—of Paran, which included the desert and mountainous space lying between the wilderness of Shur westward, or towards Egypt and Mount Seir, or the land of Edom eastward; between the land of Canaan northwards, and the Red Sea southwards; and thus it appears to have comprehended really the wilderness of Sin and Sinai. [FISK.] It is called by the Arabs El Tyh, “the wandering.” It is a dreary waste of rock and of calcareous soil covered with black sharp flints; all travellers, from a feeling of its complete isolation from the world, describe it as a great and terrible

wilderness. **22-33. ye came and said, we will send men before us and search out the land**—The proposal to despatch spies emanated from the people through unbelief; but Moses, believing them sincere, gave his cordial assent to this measure, and God on being consulted permitted them to follow the suggestion (see on Numbers, 13. 1, 2). The issue proved disastrous to them, only through their own sin and folly. **the cities are great, and walled up to heaven**—an Oriental metaphor, meaning very high. The Arab marauders roam about on horseback, and hence the walls of St. Catherine's Monastery on Sinai are so lofty that travellers are drawn up by a pulley in a basket. **Anakims**—(see on Numbers, 13. 33.) The honest and uncompromising language of Moses in reminding the Israelites of their perverse conduct and outrageous rebellion at the report of the treacherous and faint-hearted scouts, affords a strong evidence of the truth of this history as well as of the divine authority of his mission. There was great reason for his dwelling on this dark passage in their history as it was their unbelief that excluded them from the privilege of entering the promised land (Hebrews, 3. 19); and that unbelief was a marvellous exhibition of human perversity, considering the miracles which God had wrought in their favor, especially in the daily manifestations they had of His presence among them as their leader and protector. **34-36. The Lord heard the voice of your words and was wroth**—In consequence of this aggravated offence—unbelief followed by open rebellion, the Israelites were doomed, in the righteous judgment of God, to a life of wandering in that dreary wilderness, till the whole adult generation had disappeared by death. The only exceptions mentioned are Caleb, and Joshua who was to be Moses' successor. **37. Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes**—This statement *seems* to indicate that it was on this occasion Moses was condemned to share the fate of the people. But we know that it was several years afterwards that Moses betrayed an unhappy spirit of distrust at the waters of strife (Psalm 106. 32, 33). This verse must be considered therefore as a parenthesis. **39. Your children . . . who in that day had no knowledge between good and evil**—all ancient versions read "to-day" instead of "that day;" and the sense is—"your children who *now* know," or "who know not *as yet* good or evil;" as the children had not been partakers of the sinful outbreak, they were spared to obtain the privilege which their unbelieving parents had forfeited. God's ways are not as man's ways. **40-45. Turn you and take your journey into the wilderness by the Red Sea**—This command they disregarded, and, determined in spite of the earnest remonstrances of Moses to force an onward passage, they attempted to cross the heights then occupied by the combined forces of the Amorites and Amalekites (cf. Numbers, 14. 43), but were repulsed with great loss. People often experience distress even while in the way of duty. But how different their condition who suffer in situations where God is with them from the feelings of those who are conscious that they are in a position directly opposed to the Divine will. The Israelites were grieved when they found themselves involved in difficulties and perils; but their sorrow arose not from a sense of the guilt, so much as the sad effects of their perverse conduct; and as, "though they wept," they were not true penitents, the Lord would not hearken to their voice, nor give ear unto them." **46. So ye abode at Kadesh many days**—That place had been

the site of their encampment during the absence of the spies, which lasted forty days, and it is supposed from this verse, that they prolonged their stay there after their defeat for a similar period.

## CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1-37. THE STORY IS CONTINUED. **1. Then we turned and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.** After their unsuccessful attack upon the Canaanites, the Israelites broke up their encampment at Kadesh, and journeying southward over the west desert of Tyh, as well as through the great valley of the Ghor and Arabah, they extended their removals as far as the Gulf Akabah. **we compassed Mount Seir many days**—In these few words Moses comprised the whole of that wandering nomadic life which they passed during 38 years, shifting from place to place, and regulating their stations by the prospect of pasturage and water. Within the interval they went northward a second time to Kadesh, but being refused a passage through Edom, and opposed by the Canaanites and Amalekites, they again had no alternative but to traverse once more the great Arabah southwards to the Red Sea, where turning to the left, and crossing the long, lofty mountain chain to the eastward of Ezion-gaber (Numbers, 21. 4 5), they issued into the great and elevated plains, which are still traversed by the Syrian Pilgrims in their way to Mecca, and appear to have followed northward nearly the same rout, which is now taken by the Syrian Hadj, along the western skirts of this great desert, near the mountains of Edom. [ROBINSON.] It was on entering these plains they received the command, “Ye have compassed this mountain (this hilly tract, now Jebel Shera) long enough, turn ye northward.” **4. The children of Esau which dwell in Seir shall be afraid of you**—The same people who had haughtily repelled the approach of the Israelites from the western frontier, were alarmed now that they had come round upon the weak side of their country, **5. Meddle not with them**—*i.e.*, “which dwelt in Seir,” (v. 4)—for there was another branch of Esau’s posterity, *viz.*, the Amalekites, who were to be fought against and destroyed (Genesis, 36. 12; Exodus, 17. 14; Deuteronomy, 25. 17). But the people of Edom were not to be injured, either in their persons or property. And although the approach of so vast a nomadic horde as the Israelites naturally created apprehension, they were to take no advantage of the prevailing terror to compel the Edomites to accept whatever terms they imposed. They were merely to pass “through” or along their border, and to buy meat and water of them for money (v. 6). The people, kinder than their king, did sell them bread, meat, fruits, and water in their passage along their border (v. 29) in the same manner as the Syrian caravan of Mecca is now supplied by the people of the same mountains, who meet the pilgrims as at a fair or market on the Hadj route. [ROBINSON.] Although the Israelites still enjoyed a daily supply of the manna, there was no prohibition against their eating other food, when opportunity afforded, but only they were not to cherish an inordinate desire for it. Water is a scarce commodity, and is often paid for by travellers in those parts. It was the more incumbent on the Israelites to do so, as, by the blessing of God, they possessed plenty of meaus

no purchase, and the long-continued experience of the extraordinary goodness of God to them, should inspire such confinement in him as would suppress the smallest thought of resorting to fraud or violence in supplying their wants. **8-18. we passed through the way of the plain**—The Arabah, or great valley. From Elath (trees), the Ailah of the Greeks and Romans); the site of it is marked by extensive mounds of rubbish. Ezion-gaber, now Akabah, both weré within the territory of Edom; and after making a circuit of its south-eastern boundary, the Israelites reached the border of Moab on the south-east of the Salt Sea. They had been forbidden by divine command to molest the Moabites in any way: and this special honor was conferred on that people not on their own account, for they were very wicked, but in virtue of their descent from Lot (see on ch. 23. 3). Their territory comprised the fine country on the south, and partly on the north of the Arnon. They had won it by their arms from the original inhabitants, the Emims, a race terrible, as their name imports, for physical power and stature (Genesis, 14. 5); in like manner as the Edomites had obtained their settlement by the overthrow of the original occupiers of Seir, the Horims (Genesis, 14. 7) who were Troglodytes, or dwellers in caves, and Mosses alluded to these circumstances to encourage his countrymen to believe that God would much more enable them to expel the wicked and accursed Canaanites. At that time, however, the Moabites, having lost the greater part of their possessions through the usurpations of Sihon, were reduced to the small, but fertile region between the Zered and the Arnan. **13. Now rise up and get you over the brook Zered**—The southern border of Moab, *Zered* (woody), now Wady Ahsy, separates the modern district of Kerak from Jebal, and, indeed, forms a natural division of the country between the north and south. Ar, called in later times Rabbah, was the capital of Moab, and situated 25 miles south of Arnon on the banks of a small but shady stream, the Beni-Hamed. It is here mentioned as representative of the country dependent on it,—a rich and well cultivated country, as appears from the numerous ruins of cities, as well as from the traces of tillage still visible on the fields. **16. all the men of war are consumed and dead from among the people**—The outbreak at Cadesh on the false report of the spies had been the occasion of the fatal decree by which God doomed the whole grown-up population to die in the wilderness; but that outbreak only filled up the measure of their iniquities. For that generation though not universally abandoned to heathenish and idolatrous practices, yet had all along displayed a fearful amount of ungodliness in the desert, which this history only hints at obscurely, but which is expressly asserted elsewhere (Ezekiel, 20. 25, 26; Amos, 5. 25, 27; Acts, 7. 42, 43). **19-37. when thou comest nigh unto the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them**—The Ammonites, being kindred to the Moabites, were, from regard to the memory of their common ancestor, to remain undisturbed by the Israelites. The territory of this people had been directly north of that of Moab, and extended as far as that of Jabbok, having been taken by them from a number of small Canaanitish tribes, viz., the Zamzummins, a bullying presumptuous band of giants, as their name indicates; and the Avims, the Aborigines of the district extending from Hazerim or Hazeroth, (El Hudhera) even unto Azzah (Gaza), but of which they had been dispossessed by the Caphtorim (Philistines) who came out of Caphtor (Lower Egypt), and settled

in the western coast of Palestine. The limits of the Ammonites were now compressed; but they still possessed the mountainous region beyond the Jabbok (Joshua, II. 2). What a strange insight does this parenthesis of four verses give into the early history of Palestine. How many successive wars of conquest had swept over its early state—what changes of dynasty amongst the Canaanitish tribes had taken place long prior to the transactions recorded in this history. **24. Rise ye up and pass over the river Arnon**—At its mouth, this stream is 82 feet wide and 4 deep—it flows in a channel banked by perpendicular cliffs of sandstone. At the date of the Israelitish migration to the east of the Jordan, the whole of the fine country lying between the Arnon and the Jabbok, including the mountainous tract of Gilead, had been seized by the Amorites, who being one of the nations doomed to destruction (see ch. 7. 2; 20. 16) were utterly exterminated, and their country fell by right of conquest into the hands of the Israelites. Moses, however, considering this doom as referring solely to the Amorite possession west of Jordan, sent a pacific message to Sihon, requesting permission to go through his territories, which lay on the east of that river. It is always customary to send messengers before to prepare the way; but the rejection of Moses' request by Sihon, and his opposition to the advance of the Israelites (Numbers, 21. 23; Judges, II. 26), drew down on himself and his Amorite subjects, the predicted doom in the first pitched battle-field with the Canaanites, and secured to Israel not only the possession of a fine and pastoral country, but, what was of more importance to them, a free access to the Jordan on the east.

## CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1-20. CONQUEST OF OG, KING OF BASHAN. **1. we turned, and went up the way to Bashan**—Bashan (fruitful or flat), now El-Bottein, lay situated to the north of Gilead, and extended as far as Hermon. It was a rugged, mountainous country, valuable however for its rich and luxuriant pastures. **Og, king of Bashan, came out against us**—Without provocation, he rushed to attack the Israelites; either disliking the presence of such dangerous neighbors, or burning to avenge the overthrow of his friends and allies. **2. The Lord said, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand**—His gigantic appearance, and the formidable array of forces he will bring to the field, need not discourage you, for, belonging to a doomed race, he is destined to share the fate of Sihon. **3-8. Argob** was the capital of a district in Bashan of the same name, which, together with other 59 cites in the same province, were conspicuous for their lofty and fortified walls. It was a war of extermination—houses and cities were razed to the ground, all classes of people were put to the sword, and nothing was saved but the cattle, of which an immense amount fell as spoil into the hands of the conquerors. Thus, the two Amorite kings and the entire population of their dominions were extirpated, and the whole country east of the Jordan—first upland downs from the torrent of the Arnan on the south to that of the Jabbok on the north; next the high mountain tract of Gilead and Bashan from the deep ravine of Jabbok,—became the possession of the Israelites. **9. Hermon**—now *Jebel-Es-Shiech*—the

majestic hill on which the long and elevated range of anti-lebanon terminates; its summit and the ridges on its sides are almost constantly covered with snow. It is not so much one high mountain as a whole cluster of mountain peaks, the highest in Palestine. According to the survey taken by the English Government Engineers in 1840, they were about 9,376 feet above the Sea. Being a mountain chain, it is no wonder that it should have received different names at different points from the different tribes which lay along the base—all of them designating extraordinary height; Hermon, the lofty peak, “Sirion,” or in an abbreviated form “Sion,” (ch. 4. 48) the upraised, “Shenir,” the glittering breastplate of ice. **II. only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants**—*lit.*, of Rephaim. He was not the last giant, but the only living remnant in the Transjordanic country (Joshua, 15. 14) of a certain gigantic race, supposed to be the most ancient inhabitants of Palestine. **behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron**—Although beds in the east are with the common people nothing more than a simple mattress, bedsteads are not unknown: they are in use amongst the great, who prefer them of iron or other metals, not only for strength and durability, but for the prevention of the troublesome insects which in warm climates commonly infest wood. Taking the cubit at half-a-yard, the bedstead of Og would measure  $13\frac{1}{2}$  feet, so that as beds are usually a little larger than the persons who occupy them, the stature of the Amorite King may be estimated about 11 or 12 feet; or he might have caused his bed to be made much larger than was necessary, as Alexander the great did for each of his foot soldiers, to impress the Indians with an idea of the extraordinary strength and stature of his men. [LECLERC.] But how did Og’s bedstead come to be in Rabbath, of the children of Ammon? In answer to this question, it has been said, that Og had, on the eve of engagement, conveyed it to Rabbath for safety, or that Moses, after capturing it, may have sold it to the Ammonites, who had kept it as an antiquarian curiosity, till their capital was sacked in the time of David. This is a most unlikely supposition, and besides renders it necessary to consider the latter clause of this verse as an interpolation inserted long after the time of Moses. To avoid this, some eminent critics take the Hebrew word rendered “bedstead” to mean “coffin.” They think that the king of Bashan having been wounded in battle, fled to Rabbath, where he died, and was buried; hence the dimensions of his “coffin” are given. [DATHE, ROS.] **12. This land which we possessed at that time, from Aroer . . . gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites**—The whole territory occupied by Sihon, was parcelled out among the pastoral tribes of Reuben and Gad. It extended from the north bank of the Arnon to the south half of Mount Gilead—a small mountain ridge, now called Djelaad, about six or seven miles south of the Jabbok, and eight miles in length. The northern portion of Gilead, and the rich pasture lands of Bashan—a large province, consisting, with the exception of a few bleak and rocky spots, of strong and fertile soil, was assigned to the half tribe of Manasseh. **14. Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob**—The original inhabitants of the province north of Bashan, comprising sixty cities (*v.* 4), not having been extirpated along with Og, this people were afterwards brought into subjection by the energy of Jair. This chief, of the tribe of Manasseh, in accordance with the pastoral habits of his people, called these newly acquired towns

by a name which signifies "Jair's Bedouin Villages of Tents." **unto this day**—This remark must evidently have been introduced by Ezra, or some of the pious men who arranged and collected the books of Moses. **15. I gave Gilead unto Machir**—It was only the half of Gilead (*vs.* 12, 13) which was given to the descendants of Machir, who was now dead. **16. from Gilead**—*i.e.*, not the mountainous region, but the town Ramoth-Gilead—**even unto the river Arnon, half the valley**—The word "valley" signifies a wady, either filled with water or dry, as the Arnon is in summer, and thus the proper rendering of the passage will be—"even to the half or middle of the river Arnon" (*cf.* Joshua, 12. 2). This prudent arrangement of the boundaries was evidently made to prevent all disputes between the adjacent tribes about the exclusive right to the water. **34. I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon**—The natural and very earnest wish of Moses to be allowed to cross the Jordan was founded on the idea that the divine threatening might be conditional and revertible. "That goodly mountain" is supposed by Jewish writers to have pointed to the hill on which the temple was to be built (*chapter* 12. 5; Exodus, 15. 2). But Biblical scholars now, generally, render the words—"that goodly mountain, even Lebanon," and consider it to be mentioned as typifying the beauty of Palestine, of which hills and mountains were so prominent a feature. **26. speak no more unto me of this matter**—*i.e.*, my decree is unalterable.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Ver.* 1-13. AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE. **1. hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you**—By statutes were meant all ordinances respecting religion, and the rites of divine worship; and by judgments, all enactments relative to civil matters. The two embraced the whole law of God. **2. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you**—By the introduction of any heathen superstition or forms of worship different from those which I have appointed (*ch.* 12. 32; Numbers, 15, 39; Matthew, 15. 9). **neither shall ye diminish ought from it**—by the neglect or omission of any of the observances, however trivial or irksome, which I have prescribed. The character and provisions of the ancient dispensation were adopted with divine wisdom to the instruction of that infant state of the church. But it was only a temporary economy; and although God here authorises Moses to command that all its institutions should be honored with unfailing observance, this did not prevent Him from commissioning other prophets to alter or abrogate them when the end of that dispensation was attained. **3, 4. Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor...the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you**—It appears that the pestilence and the sword of justice overtook only the guilty in that affair (Numbers, 25), while the rest of the people were spared. The allusion to that recent and appalling judgment was seasonably made as a powerful dissuasive against idolatry, and the fact mentioned was calculated to make a deep impression on people who knew and felt the truth of it. **5, 6. this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of nations which**



**shall hear all these statutes**—Moses predicted that the faithful observance of the laws given them would raise their national character for intelligence and wisdom; and in point of fact it did do so; for although the heathen world generally ridiculed the Hebrews for what they considered a foolish and absurd exclusiveness, some of the most eminent philosophers expressed the highest admiration of the fundamental principle in the Jewish religion—the unity of God; and their legislators borrowed some laws from the constitution of the Hebrews. **7, 9. what nation is there so great**—Here he represents their privileges and their duty in such significant and comprehensive terms, as were peculiarly calculated to arrest their attention, and engage their interest. The former, their national advantages, are described, (*vs.* 7, 8,) and they were two-fold:—1. God's readiness to hear and aid them at all times; and 2. the excellence of that religion in which they were instructed, set forth in the "statutes and judgments so righteous" which the law of Moses contained. Their duty corresponding to these pre-eminent advantages as a people, was also two-fold:—1. their own faithful obedience to that law; and 2. their obligation to imbue the minds of the young and rising generation with similar sentiments of reverence and respect for it. **10. the day thou stoodest before the Lord in Horeb**—The delivery of the law from Sinai was an era never to be forgotten in the history of Israel. Some of those whom Moses was addressing had been present, though very young; while the rest were federally represented by their parents, who in their name and for their interest entered into the national covenant. **12. Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude**—although articulate sounds were heard emanating from the mount, no form or representation of the Divine Being who spoke was seen to indicate his nature or properties according to the notions of the heathen.

Ver. 14-40, A PARTICULAR DISSUASIVE AGAINST IDOLATRY. **15.**

**Take good heed for ye saw no manner of similitude**—The extreme proneness of the Israelites to idolatry, from their position in the midst of surrounding nations already abandoned to its seductions, accounts for their attention being repeatedly drawn to the fact that God did not appear on Sinai in any visible form; and an earnest caution founded on that remarkable circumstance, is given to beware not only of making representations of false gods, but also any fancied representation of the true God. **16-19. lest ye corrupt yourselves and make a graven image**—The things are here specified of which God prohibited any image or representation to be made for the purposes of worship; and, from the variety of details entered into, an idea may be formed of the extensive prevalence of idolatry in that age. In whatever way idolatry originated, whether from an intention to worship the true God through those things which seemed to afford the strongest evidences of his power, or whether a divine principle was supposed to reside in the things themselves there was scarcely an element or object of nature but was deified. This was particularly the case with the Canaanites and Egyptians, against whose superstitious practices the caution, no doubt, was chiefly directed. The former worshipped Baal and Astarte—the latter Osiris and Isis, under the figure of a male and a female. It was in Egypt that animal worship most prevailed, for the natives of that country deified among **beasts**—the ox, the heifer, the sheep, and the goat, the dog, the cat, and

the ape; among birds—the ibis, the hawk and the crane; among reptiles,—the crocodile, the frog and the beetle; among fishes—all the fish of the Nile; some of these as Osiris and Isis were worshipped over all Egypt, the others only in particular provinces; in addition to which they embraced the Zabian superstition, the adoration of the Egyptians, in common with that of many other people, extending to the whole starry host. The very circumstantial details here given of the Canaanitish and Egyptian idolatry, were owing to the past and prospective familiarity of the Israelites with it in all these forms. **20. But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you out of the iron furnace—i.e.,** a furnace for smelting iron. A furnace of this kind is round, sometimes 30 feet deep, and requiring the highest intensity of heat. Such is the tremendous image chosen to represent the bondage and affliction of the Israelites [ROSENMULLER]. **to be unto him a people of inheritance—**His peculiar possession from age to age; and therefore for you to abandon his worship for that of idols, especially the gross and debasing system of idolatry that prevails among the Egyptians, would be the greatest folly—the blackest ingratitude. **26. I call heaven and earth to witness against you—**this solemn form of adjuration has been common in special circumstances amongst all people. It is used here figuratively, or as in other parts of Scripture, where inanimate objects are called up as witnesses (ch. 32. 1; Isaiah, 1. 2). **28. there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands—**The compulsory measures of their tyrannical conquerors would force them into idolatry, so that their choice would become their punishment. **30. in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God—**either towards the destined close of their captivities when they evinced a returning spirit of repentance and faith, or in the age of Messiah, which is commonly called “the latter days,” and when the scattered tribes of Israel shall be converted to the gospel of Christ. The occurrence of this auspicious event will be the most illustrious proof of the truth of the promise made in v. 31. **41-43. Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan—**(See on Joshua, 20. 7, 8). **44-49. This is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel—**This is a preface to the rehearsal of the law, which, with the addition of various explanatory circumstances, the following chapters contain. **46. Beth-Peor—i.e.,** house or temple of Peor. It is probable that a temple of this Moabite idol stood in full view of the Hebrew camp, while Moses was urging the exclusive claims of God to their worship; and this allusion would be very significant if it were the temple where so many of the Israelites had so grievously offended. **49. The springs of Pisgah—**more frequently Ashdoth-pisgah (ch. 3. 17; Joshua, 12. 3; 13. 20), the roots or foot of the mountains east of the Jordan.

## CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1-29. A COMMEMORATION OF THE COVENANT IN HOREB.  
**1. Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments—**Whether this rehearsal of the law was made in a solemn assembly, or as some think at a general meeting of the elders as representatives of the people, is of little moment; it was addressed either directly or indirectly to the Hebrew people as principles of their peculiar constitution as a nation;

and hence, as has been well observed, "the Jewish law has no obligations upon Christians, unless so much of it as given or commanded by Jesus Christ; for whatever in this law is conformable to the laws of nature, obliges us, not as given by Moses, but by virtue of an antecedent law common to all rational beings." [BISHOP WILSON.] **3. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us**—The meaning is, "not with our fathers" only, "but with us" also, assuming it to be "a covenant" of grace; or "not with our fathers" at all, if the reference is to the peculiar establishment of the covenant at Sinai: a law was not given to them as to us, nor was the covenant ratified in the same public manner, and by the same solemn sanctions. Or, finally, "not with our fathers" who died in the wilderness, in consequence of their rebellion, and to whom God did not give the rewards promised only to the faithful; but "with us," who alone, strictly speaking, shall enjoy the benefits of this covenant by entering on the possession of the promised land.

**4. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount**—not in a visible and corporeal form, of which there was no trace (ch. 4. 12, 15), but freely, familiarly, and in such a manner that no doubt could be entertained of His presence. **5. I stood between the Lord and you at that time**—as the messenger and interpreter of thy Heavenly King, bringing near two objects, formerly removed from each other at a vast distance, viz., God and the people (Galatians, 10. 19). In this character Moses was a type of Christ, who is the only mediator between God and men (1 Timothy, 11. 5), the Mediator of a better covenant (Hebrews, 8. 6; 9. 15; 12. 24). **to shew you the word of the Lord**—not the ten commandments—for they were proclaimed directly by the Divine Speaker himself, but the statutes and judgments which are repeated in the subsequent portion of this book. **6-20. I am the Lord thy God**—The word "Lord" is expressive of authority or dominion; and God, who by natural claim as well as by covenant relation, was entitled to exercise supremacy over his people Israel, had a sovereign right to establish laws for their government. The commandments which follow are, with a few slight verbal alterations, the same as formerly recorded (Exodus, 20.), and in some of them there is a distinct reference to that promulgation. **12. Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord hath commanded thee**—*i.e.*, keep it in mind as a sacred institution of former enactment and perpetual obligation. **14. that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou**—This is a different reason for the observance of the Sabbath from what is assigned in Exodus, 20. where that day is stated to be an appointed memorial of the creation. But the addition of another motive for the observance does not imply any necessary contrariety to the other; and it has been thought probable that, the commemorative design of the institution being well known, the other reason was specially mentioned on this repetition of the law, to secure the privilege of sabbatic rest to servants, of which, in some Hebrew families, they had been deprived. In this view, the allusion to the period of Egyptian bondage (*v.* 15), when themselves were not permitted to observe the Sabbath either as a day of rest, or of public devotion, was peculiarly seasonable and significant, well fitted to come home to their business and bosoms. **16. that it may go well with thee**

—This clause is not in Exodus, but admitted into Ephesians, 6. 3. **21. neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, house, and field**—an

alteration is here made in the words (see Exodus, 20.), but it is so slight ("wife" being put in the first clause, and house in the second) that it would not have been worth while noticing it, except that the interchange proves, contrary to the opinion of some eminent critics, that these two objects are included in one and the same commandment. **22. He added no more**—(Exodus, 20. 1). The pre-eminence of these ten commandments was shewn in God's announcing them directly; other laws and institutions were communicated to the people through the instrumentality of Moses. **23-28. And...ye came near unto me**—(See on Exodus, 20. 19). **29. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me**—God can bestow such a heart, and has promised to give it, wherever it is asked (Jeremiah, 32. 40). But the wish which is here expressed on the part of God for the piety and steadfast obedience of the Israelites did not relate to them as individuals, so much as a nation, whose religious character and progress would have a mighty influence on the world at large.

## CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1-25. MOSES EXHORTETH ISRAEL TO HEAR GOD AND TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. **1. Now these are the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which the Lord commanded to teach you, that ye might do them...whither ye go to possess it**—The grand design of all the institutions prescribed to Israel was to form a religious people, whose national character should be distinguished by that fear of the Lord their God, which would ensure their divine observance of His worship, and their steadfast obedience to His will. The basis of their religion was an acknowledgment of the unity of God with the understanding, and the love of God in the heart (*v.* 4, 5). Compared with the religious creed of all their contemporaries, how sound in principle, how elevated in character, how unlimited in the extent of its moral influence on the heart and habits of the people. Indeed, it is precisely the same basis on which rests the purer and more spiritual form of it which Christianity exhibits (Matthew, 22. 37; Mark, 12. 30; Luke, 10. 27). Moreover, to help in keeping a sense of religion in their minds, it was commanded that its great principles should be carried about with them wherever they went, as well as meet their eyes every time they entered their homes; a further provision was made for the earnest inculcation of them on the minds of the young by a system of parental training, which was designed to associate religion with all the most familiar and oft-recurring scenes of domestic life. It is probable that Moses used the phraseology in the seventh verse, merely in a figurative way, to signify assiduous, earnest, and frequent instruction; and perhaps he meant the metaphorical language in the eighth verse to be taken in the same sense also. But as the Israelites interpreted it literally, many writers suppose that a reference was made to a superstitious custom borrowed from the Egyptians, who wore jewels and ornamental trinkets on the forehead and arm, inscribed with certain words and sentences, as amulets to protect them from danger. These, it has been conjectured, Moses intended to supersede by substituting sentences of the law; and

so the Hebrews understood him, for they have always considered the wearing of the *Tephilim* or frontlets a permanent obligation. The form was as follows:—Four pieces of parchment, inscribed, the first with Exodus, 13. 2-10; the second with Exodus, 13. 11-16; the third with Deuteronomy, 6. 1-8; and the fourth with Deuteronomy, 11. 18-21, were enclosed in a square case or box of tough skin, on the side of which was placed the Hebrew letter (*shin*) and bound round the forehead with a thong or ribbon. When designed for the arms, those four texts were written on one slip of parchment, which, as well as the ink, was carefully prepared for the purpose. With regard to the other usage supposed to be alluded to, the ancient Egyptians had the lintels and imposts of their doors and gates inscribed with sentences indicative of a favorable omen [WILKINSON]; and this is still the case, for in Egypt and other Mahomedan countries, the front doors of houses—in Cairo, for instance—are painted red, white, and green, bearing conspicuously inscribed upon them such sentences from the Koran, as “God is the Creator,” “God is one, and Mahomet is his prophet.” Moses designed to turn this ancient and favorite custom to a better account, and ordered that, instead of the former superstitious inscriptions, should be written the words of God, persuading and enjoining the people to hold the laws in perpetual remembrance. **20-25. When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying**—The directions given for the instruction of their children form only an extension of the preceding counsels.

## CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1-26. ALL COMMUNION WITH THE NATIONS FORBIDDEN. **I. The Hittites**—This people were descended from Heth, the second son of Canaan (Genesis, 10. 15), and occupied the mountainous region about Hebron, in the south of Palestine. The Girgashites supposed by some to be the same as the Gergesenes (Matthew, 8. 28), who lay to the east of Lake Gennesareth; but they are placed on the west of Jordan (Joshua, 24. 11), and others take them for a branch of the large family of the Hivites, as they are omitted in nine out of ten places where the tribes of Canaan are enumerated; in the tenth they are mentioned, while the Hivites are not. **The Amorites**—descended from the fourth son of Canaan, occupied, besides their conquest on the Moabite territory, extensive settlements west of the Dead Sea, in the mountains. **The Canaanites**—were located in Phœnicia, particularly about Tyre and Sidon, and being sprung from the eldest branch of the family of Canaan, bore his name. **The Perizzites**—*i.e.*, *villagers*, a tribe who were dispersed throughout the country, and lived in unwalled towns. **The Hivites**—who dwelt about Ebal and Gerizim, extending towards Hermon. They are supposed to be the same as the Avims. **The Jebusites**—resided about Jerusalem and the adjacent country. **seven nations greater and mightier than thou**—Ten were formerly mentioned (Genesis, 15. 19-21). But in the lapse of near 500 years, it cannot be surprising that some of them had been extinguished in the many intestine feuds that prevailed amongst those warlike tribes; and it is more than probable that some, stationed on the east of Jordan, had fallen under the victorious arms of the Israelites. **2-6. Thou shalt smite them, and**

**utterly destroy them ; thou shalt make no covenant with them**—This relentless doom of extermination which God denounced against those tribes of Canaan cannot be reconciled with the attributes of the Divine character, except on the assumption that their gross idolatry and enormous wickedness left no reasonable hope of their repentance and amendment. If they were to be swept away like the Antediluvians, or the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, as incorrigible sinners who had filled up the measure of their iniquities, it mattered not to them in what way the judgment was inflicted ; and God, as the Sovereign Disposer, had a right to employ any instruments that pleased Him for executing His judgments. Some think that they were to be exterminated as unprincipled usurpers of a country which God had assigned to the posterity of Eber, and which had been occupied ages before by wandering shepherds of that race, till, on the migration of Jacob's family into Egypt through the pressure of famine, the Canaanites overspread the whole land, though they had no legitimate claim to it, and endeavored to retain possession of it by force. In this view their expulsion was just and proper. The strict prohibition against contracting any alliances with such infamous idolators was a prudential rule, founded on the experience that "evil communications corrupt good manners," and its importance or necessity was attested by the unhappy examples of Solomon and others in the subsequent history of Israel. **5. Thus shall ye deal with them, ye shall destroy their altars, etc.**—The removal of the temples, altars, and everything that had been enlisted in the service, or might tend to perpetuate the remembrance, of Canaanite idolatry was likewise highly expedient for preserving the Israelites from all risk of contamination. It was imitated by our Scottish reformers, and although many ardent lovers of architecture and the fine arts have anathematized their proceedings as Vandalism, yet there was profound wisdom in the favorite maxim of Knox—"pull down the nests, and the rooks will disappear." **6-10. for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God**—*i. e.*, set apart to the service of God, or chosen to execute the important purposes of His providence. Their selection to this high destiny was neither on account of their numerical amount, for, till after the death of Joseph, they were but a handful of people ; nor of their extraordinary merits, for they had often pursued a most perverse and unworthy conduct ; but it was in consequence of the covenant or promise made with their pious forefathers, and the motives that led to that special act were such as tended not only to vindicate God's wisdom, but to illustrate His glory in diffusing the best and most precious blessings to all mankind. **11-26. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day**—In the covenant into which God entered with Israel, He promised to bestow upon them a variety of blessings so long as they continued obedient to Him as their heavenly King, and pledged His veracity that His infinite perfections would be exerted for this purpose as well as for delivering them from every evil to which, as a People, they would be exposed. That people accordingly were truly happy as a nation, and found every promise which the faithful God made to them amply fulfilled, so long as they adhered to that obedience which was required of them. See a beautiful illustration of this in Psalm 144. 12-15. **The evil diseases of Egypt**—(See Exodus, 15. 36.) But besides those with which Pharaoh

and his subjects were visited, Egypt has always been dreadfully scourged with diseases, and the testimony of Moses is confirmed by the reports of many modern writers, who tell us that, notwithstanding its equal temperature and sereneness, that country has some indigenous maladies which are very malignant, such as ophthalmia, dysentery, small pox, and the plague. **20. God will send the hornet among them**—(See on Joshua, 24. 11-13.) **22. lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee**—(See on Exodus, 23. 28-30.) The omnipotence of their Almighty Ruler could have given them possession of the promised land at once. But, the unburied corpses of the enemy, and the portion of the country that might have been left desolate for a while, would have drawn an influx of dangerous beasts. This evil would be prevented by a progressive conquest, and by the use of ordinary means which God would bless.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1-20. AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE. **1. All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe, that ye may live**—Duty has been made in all the wise arrangements of our Creator inseparably connected with happiness, and the earnest enforcement of the divine law which Moses was making to the Israelites was in order to secure their being a happy, because a moral and religious people; a course of prosperity is often called life (Genesis, 17. 18; Proverbs, 3. 2). **live and multiply**—This reference to the future increase of their population proves that they were too few to occupy the land fully at first. **2. Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness**—The recapitulation of all their chequered experience during that long period was designed to awaken lively impressions of the goodness of God. First, Moses showed them the object of their protracted wanderings and varied hardships; these were trials of their obedience as well as chastisements for sin. Indeed, the discovery of their infidelity, inconstancy, and their rebellions and perverseness which this varied discipline brought to light, was of eminently practical use to the Israelites themselves, as it has been to the Church in all subsequent ages. Next, he enlarged on the goodness of God to them, while reduced to the last extremities of despair, in the miraculous provision which, without anxiety or labor, was made for their daily support (see on Exodus, 16. 12), and which, possessing no nutritious properties inherent in it, contributed to their sustenance, as indeed all food does (Matthew, 4. 4), solely through the ordinance and blessing of God. This remark is applicable to the means of spiritual as well as natural life. **4. thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years**—What a striking miracle was this. No doubt the Israelites might have brought from Egypt more clothes than they wore at their outset; they might also have obtained supplies of various articles of food and raiment in barter with the neighboring tribes for the fleeces and skins of their sheep and goats; and in furnishing them with such opportunities the care of Providence appeared. But the strong and pointed terms which Moses here uses (see also ch. 29. 5) indicate a

special or miraculous interposition of their loving guardian in preserving them amid the tear and wear of their nomadic life in the desert. Thirdly, Moses expatiated on the goodness of the promised land. **7. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land**—All accounts, ancient and modern, concur in bearing testimony to the natural beauty and fertility of Palestine, and its great capabilities if properly cultivated. **a land of brooks, of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills**—These characteristic features are mentioned first, as they would be most striking; and all travellers describe how delightful and cheerful it is, after passing through the barren and thirsty desert, to be among running brooks and swelling hills and verdant valleys. It is observable that water is mentioned as the chief source of its ancient fertility. **8. a land of wheat and barley**—These cereal fruits were specially promised to the Israelites in the event of their faithful allegiance to the covenant of God (Psalm 81. 16; 147. 14). The wheat and barley were so abundant as to yield sixty and often an hundredfold (Gen. 26. 12; Matthew, 13. 8). **vines, fig-trees, and pomegranates**—The lime-stone rocks and abrupt valleys were entirely covered, as traces of them still shew, with plantations of figs, vines, and olive trees. Though in a southern latitude, its mountainous formation tempered the excessive heat, and hence figs, pomegranates, etc., were produced in Palestine equally with wheat and barley, the produce of northern regions. **Honey**—the word honey is used often in a loose indeterminate sense, very frequently to signify a syrup of dates or of grapes, which under the name of *Dibs* is much used by all classes, wherever vineyards are found, as a condiment to their food. It resembles thin molasses, but is more pleasant to the taste. [ROBINSON.] This is esteemed a great delicacy in the east, and it was produced abundantly in Palestine. **9. a land whose stones are iron**—The abundance of this metal in Palestine, especially among the mountains of Lebanon, those of Kesraoun, and elsewhere, is attested not only by Josephus, but by Volney, Buckingham, and other travellers. **Brass**—not the alloy brass, but the ore of copper. Although the mines may now be exhausted or neglected, they yielded plenty of those metals anciently (1 Chronicles, 22. 3; 29. 2-7; Isaiah, 60. 17). **11-20. Beware that thou forget not the Lord**—After mentioning those instances of the divine goodness, Moses founded on them an argument for their future obedience. **15. who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions**—Large and venomous reptiles are found in great numbers there still, particularly in autumn. Travellers require to use great caution in arranging their tents and beds at night; even during the day the legs not only of men, but of the animals they ride are liable to be bitten. **who brought thee forth water out of the flinty rock**—(See on chap. 9. 21).

## CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1-25. MOSES DISSUADETH THEM FROM THE OPINION OF THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS. **1. this day**—means *this time*. The Israelites had reached the confines of the promised land, but were obliged, to their great mortification, to return. But now were they certainly to enter it.



No obstacle could prevent their possession; neither the fortified defences of the town, nor the resistance of the gigantic inhabitants of whom they had received from the spies so formidable a description. **cities great and fenced up to heaven**—Oriental cities generally cover a much greater space than those in Europe; for the houses often stand apart with gardens and fields intervening. They are almost all surrounded with walls built of burnt or sun-dried bricks, about 40 ft. in height. All classes in the East, but especially the nomad tribes, in their ignorance of engineering and artillery, would abandon in despair, the idea of an assault on a walled town, which European soldiers would demolish in a few hours.

**4. Speak not thou in thy heart, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me to possess it**—Moses takes special care to guard his countrymen against the vanity of supposing that their own merits had procured them the distinguished privilege. The Canaanites were a hopelessly corrupt race, and deserved extermination; but history relates many remarkable instances in which God punished corrupt and guilty nations by the instrumentality of other people as bad as themselves. It was not for the sake of the Israelites, but for His own sake; for the promise made to their pious ancestors, and in furtherance of high and comprehensive purposes of good to the world, that God was about to give them a grant of Canaan. **7. Remember and forget not how thou provokedst the Lord**—To dislodge from their minds any presumptuous idea of their own righteousness, Moses rehearses their acts of disobedience and rebellion committed so frequently, and in circumstances of the most awful and impressive solemnity, that they had forfeited all claims to the favor of God. The candor and boldness with which he gave, and the patient submission with which the people bore, his recital of charges so discreditable to their national character, has often been appealed to as among the many evidences of the truth of this history.

**8. also in Horeb**—rather, even in Horeb, where it might have been expected they would have acted otherwise. **12-29. Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for the people have corrupted themselves**—With a view to humble them effectually, Moses proceeds to particularize some of the most atrocious instances of their infidelity; and he begins with the impiety of the golden calf—an impiety which, while their miraculous emancipation from Egypt, the most stupendous displays of the Divine Majesty that were exhibited on the adjoining mount, and the recent ratification of the covenant by which they engaged to act as the people of God, were fresh in memory, indicated a degree of inconstancy or debasement almost incredible. **17. I took the two tables and broke them before your eyes**—not in the heat of intemperate passion, but in righteous indignation, from zeal to vindicate the unsullied honor of God, and by the suggestion of His Spirit to intimate that the covenant had been broken, and the people excluded from the Divine favor. **18. I fell down before the Lord**—The sudden and painful reaction which this scene of Pagan revelry produced on the mind of the pious and patriotic leader can be more easily imagined than described. Great and public sins call for seasons of extraordinary humiliation, and in his deep affliction for the awful apostacy, he seems to have held a miraculous fast as long as before. **20. The Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him**—By allowing himself to be overborne by the tide of popular clamor, he became a partaker in

the guilt of idolatry, and would have suffered the penalty of his sinful compliance, had not the earnest intercession of Moses on his behalf prevailed. **21. I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount**—*i.e.*, the smitten rock (El Leja) which was probably contiguous to, or a part of Sinai. It is too seldom borne in mind that though the Israelites were supplied with water from this rock when they were stationed at Rephidim (Wady Feiran), there is nothing in the Scripture narrative which should lead us to suppose that the rock was in the immediate neighborhood of that place (see on Exodus, 17. 5, 6). The water on this smitten rock was probably the brook that descended from the mount. The water may have flowed at the distance of many miles from the rock, as the winter torrents do now through the Wadis of Arabia Petræa (Psalm 78. 15, 16). And the rock may have been smitten at such a height, and at a spot bearing such a relation to the Sinaitic valleys, as to furnish in this way supplies of water to the Israelites during the journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir and Kadesh-Barnea (ch. 1. 1, 2). On this supposition new light is, perhaps, cast on the figurative language of the apostle, when he speaks of "the rock following" the Israelites (1 Corinthians, 10. 4). [WILSON'S LAND OF THE BIBLE.] **25. Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first**—After the enumeration of various acts of rebellion, he had mentioned the outbreak at Kadesh-Barnea, which, on a superficial reading of this verse, would seem to have led Moses to a third and protracted season of humiliation. But on a comparison of this passage with Numbers, 14. 5, the subject and language of this prayer shew that only the second act of intercession (*v.* 18) is now described in fuller detail.

## CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1-22. GOD'S MERCY IN RESTORING THE TWO TABLES. **1. At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first**—It was when God had been pacified through the intercessions of Moses with the people who had so greatly offended Him by the worship of the golden calf. The obedient leader executed the orders he had received as to the preparation both of the hewn stones, and the ark or chest, in which those sacred archives were to be laid. **3. I made an ark of Shittim wood**—It appears, however, from Exodus, 37. 1, that the ark was not framed till his return from the Mount, or most probably, he gave instructions to Bezaleel, the artist employed on the work, before he ascended the mount,—that, on his descent, it might be finished, and ready to receive the precious deposit. **4, 5. he wrote on the tables according to the first writing**—*i.e.*, not Moses, who under the divine direction acted as amanuensis, but God himself who made this inscription a second time with His own hand, to testify the importance He attached to the ten commandments. Different from other stone monuments of antiquity, which were made to stand upright and in the open air, those on which the Divine law was engraven was portable, and designed to be kept as a treasure. Josephus says that each of the tables contained five precepts. But the tradition generally received, both amongst Jewish and Christian writers is, that one table contained

four precepts, the other six. **I put them in the ark which I had made there they be, as the Lord commanded me**—Here is another minute, but important circumstance, the public mention of which at the time attests the veracity of the sacred historian. **6-9. The children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera**—So sudden a change from a spoken discourse to a historical narrative, has greatly puzzled the most eminent Biblical scholars, some of whom reject the parenthesis as a manifest interpolation. But it is found in the most ancient Hebrew MSS., and, believing that all contained in this book was given by inspiration, and is entitled to profound respect, we must receive it as it stands, although acknowledging our inability to explain the insertion of these encampment details in this place. There is another difficulty in the narrative itself. The stations which the Israelites are said successively to have occupied, are enumerated here in a different order from Numbers, 33. 31. That the names of the stations in both passages are the same there can be no doubt; but, in Numbers, they are probably mentioned in reference to the *first* visit of the Hebrews during the long wandering southwards, before their return to Kadesh the second time; while here they have a reference to the *second* passage of the Israelites, when they again marched south, in order to compass the land of Edom. It is easy to conceive that Mosera (Hor) and the wells of Jaakan might lie in such a direction that a nomadic horde might, in different years, at one time take the former *first* in their way, and at another time the latter. [ROBINSON.] 10-22. Moses here resumes his address, and having made a passing allusion to the principal events in their history, concludes by exhorting them to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully. **16. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart**—Here he teaches them the true and spiritual meaning of that rite, as was afterwards more strongly urged by Paul (Romans, 2. 25, 29), and should be applied by us to our baptism, which is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.”

## CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1-32. AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE. **1. Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge**—The reason of the frequent repetition of the same or similar counsels is to be traced to the infantine character and state of the church, which required line upon line, and precept upon precept. Besides, the Israelites were a headstrong and perverse people, impatient of control, prone to rebellion, and, from their long stay in Egypt, so violently addicted to idolatry, that they ran imminent risk of being seduced by the religion of the country to which they were going, which, in its characteristic features, bore a strong resemblance to that of the country they had left. **2-9. I speak not to your children which have not known . . . but your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did**—Moses is here giving a brief summary of the marvels and miracles of awful judgment which God had wrought in affecting their release from the tyranny of Pharaoh, as well as those which had taken place in the wilderness; and he knew that he might dwell upon these, for he was addressing many who had

been witnesses of these appalling incidents. For it will be remembered that the divine threatening that they should die in the wilderness, and its execution extended only to males from 20 years and upward, who were able to go forth to war. No males under 20 years of age, no females, and none of the tribe of Levi, were objects of the denunciation (see Numbers, 14. 28-30; 16. 49). There might, therefore, have been many thousands of the Israelites at that time of whom Moses could say, "your eyes have seen all the great acts which He did;" and with regard to those, the historic review of Moses was well calculated to stir up their minds to the duty and advantages of obedience. **10-12. For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out**—The physical features of Palestine present a striking contrast to those of the land of bondage. A widely extending plain forms the cultivated portion of Egypt, and on the greater part of this low and level country rain never falls. This natural want is supplied by the annual overflow of the Nile, and by artificial means from the same source, when the river has receded within its customary channel. Close by the bank, the process of irrigation is very simple. The cultivator opens a small sluice on the edge of the square bed in which seed has been sown, making drill after drill; and when a sufficient quantity of water has poured in, he shuts them up with his foot. Where the bank is high, the water is drawn up by hydraulic engines, of which there are three kinds used, of different power, according to the subsidence of the stream. The water is distributed in small channels or earthen conduits, simple in construction, worked by the foot, and formed with a mattock by the gardener who directs their course, and which are banked up or opened, as occasion may require, by pressing in the soil with the foot. Thus was the land watered in which the Israelites had dwelt so long. Such vigilance and laborious industry would not be needed in the promised land, for instead of being visited only at one brief season, and left during the rest of the year under a withering blight, every season it would enjoy the benign influences of a genial climate; the hills would attract the frequent clouds, and, in the refreshing showers, the blessing of God would especially rest upon the land. **A land which the Lord thy God careth for**—*i.e.*, watering it as it were with his own hands, without human aid or mechanical means. **14. The first rain and the latter rain**—The early rain commenced in autumn, *i.e.*, chiefly during the months of September and October, while the latter rain fell in the spring of the year, *i.e.*, during the months of March and April. It is true that occasional showers fell all the winter; but, at the autumnal and vernal seasons, they were more frequent, copious, and important; for the early rain was necessary, after a hot and protracted summer, to prepare the soil for receiving the seed; and the latter rain, which shortly preceded the harvest, was of the greatest use in invigorating the languishing powers of vegetation (Jeremiah, 5. 24; Joel, 11. 23; Amos, 4. 7; James, 5. 7). **15-17. I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle**—Undoubtedly the special blessing of the former and the latter rain was one principal cause of the extraordinary fertility of Canaan in ancient times. That blessing was promised to the Israelites as a temporal reward for their fidelity to the national covenant. It was threatened to be withdrawn on their disobedience or apostacy, and most signally is the execution of that threatening seen in the present sterility

of Palestine. Mr. Lowthian, an English farmer, who was struck during his journey from Joppa to Jerusalem by not seeing a blade of grass, where even in the poorest localities of Britain, some wild vegetation is found, directed his attention particularly to the subject, and pursued the enquiry during a month's residence in Jerusalem, where he learned that a miserably small quantity of milk is daily sold to the inhabitants at a dear rate, and that chiefly ass's milk. "Most clearly," says he, "did I perceive that the barrenness of large portions of the country was owing to the cessation of the early and latter rain, and that the absence of grass and flowers made it no longer the land (*v. 9*) flowing with milk and honey." **18-25. lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them**—(see on ch. 6. 8). **every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours**—not as if the Jews should be lords of the world, but of every place within the promised land. It should be granted to them, and possessed by them, on conditions of obedience: **from the wilderness**—the Arabah on the south; **Lebanon**—the northern limit; **Euphrates**—their boundary on the east; their grant of dominion extended so far, and the right was fulfilled to Solomon. **even unto the uttermost sea**—the Mediterranean. **26-32. Behold I set before you this day, a blessing and a curse**—(See on ch. 27. 11).

## CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1-15. MONUMENTS OF IDOLATRY TO BE DESTROYED. **1. These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe**—Having in the preceding chapter inculcated upon the Israelites the general obligation to fear and love God, Moses here enters into a detail of some special duties they were to practice on their obtaining possession of the promised land. **2. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess serve their gods**—This divine command was founded on the tendencies of human nature: for to remove out of sight everything that had been associated with idolatry that it might never be spoken of, and no vestige of it remain, was the only effectual way to keep the Israelites from temptations to it. It is observable that Moses does not make any mention of temples, for such buildings were not in existence at that early period. The "places" chosen as the scene of heathen worship were situated either on the summit of a lofty mountain, or on some artificial mound, or in a grove, planted with particular trees, such as oaks, poplars, and elms (Isaiah, 57. 5-7; Hosea, 4. 13). The reason for the selection of such sites was both to secure retirement and to direct the attention upward to heaven; and the "place" was nothing else than a consecrated enclosure, or at most, a canopy or screen from the weather. **3. ye shall overthrow their altars**—Piles of turf or small stones. **and break their pillars**—Before the art of sculpture was known, the statues of idols were only rude blocks of colored stones. **5-15. unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to put his name there . . . thou shalt come**—They were forbidden to worship either in the impure superstitious manner of the heathen, or in any of the places frequented by them. A particular place for the general rendezvous of all the tribes would be chosen by God himself; and the choice of one common place for the solemn rites of religion was an act of divine wis-

dom, for the security of the true religion; it was admirably calculated to prevent the corruption which would otherwise have crept in from their frequenting groves and high hills,—to preserve uniformity of worship, and keep alive their faith in Him to whom all their sacrifices pointed. The place was successively Mizpeh, Shiloh, and especially Jerusalem; but in all the references made to it by Moses, the name is never mentioned; and this studied silence was maintained partly lest the Canaanites within whose territories it lay, might have concentrated their forces to frustrate all hopes of obtaining it: partly lest the desire of possessing a place of such importance might have become a cause of strife or rivalry amongst the Hebrew tribes, as about the appointment to the priesthood (Numbers, 16.)

**7. There ye shall eat before the Lord**—Of the things mentioned (*v.* 6); but of course, none of the parts assigned to the priests before the Lord—in the place where the sanctuary should be established, and in those parts of the Holy city which the people were at liberty to frequent and inhabit.

**12. Ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye, your sons, and your daughters, etc.**—Hence it appears, that although males only were commanded to appear before God at the annual solemn feasts (Exodus, 23. 17), the women were allowed to accompany them (1 Samuel, 1. 3. 23).

**15. Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates**—Every animal designed for food, whether ox, goat, or lamb, was during the abode in the wilderness ordered to be slain as a peace offering at the door of the tabernacle; its blood to be sprinkled, and its fat to be burnt upon the altar by the priest. The encampment, being then round about the altar, made this practice, appointed to prevent idolatry, easy and practicable. But on the settlement in the promised land, the obligation to slay at the tabernacle was dispensed with, and the people left at liberty to prepare their meat in their cities or homes.

**according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee**—*i.e.*, the style of living should be accommodated to one's condition and means—profuse and riotous indulgence can never secure the divine blessing.

**the unclean and the clean may eat thereof**—The unclean here were those who were under some slight defilement, which, without excluding them from society, yet debarred them from eating any of the sacred meats (Leviticus, 7. 20). They were at liberty freely to partake of common articles of food.

**of the roebuck**—the gazelle. **and as of the hart**—The Syrian deer (*cervus barbatus*) is a species between our red and fallow deer, distinguished by the want of abis-antler, or second branch on the horns, reckoning from below, and for a spotted livery which is effaced only in the third or fourth year. [BIBLICAL CYCLOPÆDIA.]

Ver. 16-25. BLOOD PROHIBITED. **Ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water**—The prohibition against eating or drinking blood as an unnatural custom accompanied the announcement of the divine grant of animal flesh for food (Genesis, 9. 4), and the prohibition was repeatedly renewed by Mōses with reference to the great objects of the law (Leviticus, 17. 2), the prevention of idolatry, and the consecration of the sacrificial blood to God. In regard, however, to the blood of animals slain for food, it might be shed without ceremony, and poured on the ground as a common thing like water,—only for the sake of decency, as well as for preventing all risk of idolatry, it was to be covered over with earth (Leviticus, 17. 13) in opposition to the practice

of heathen sportsmen who left it exposed as an offering to the god of the chase. **22-28. Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so shalt thou eat them, etc.**—Game when procured in the wilderness had not been required to be brought to the door of the tabernacle. The people were now to be as free in the killing of domestic cattle as of wild animals. The permission to hunt and use venison for food was doubtless a great boon to the Israelites, not only in the wilderness, but on their settlement in Canaan, as the mountainous ranges of Lebanon, Carmel, and Gilead, on which deer abounded in vast numbers, would thus furnish them with a plentiful and luxurious repast.

Ver. 26-32. **HOLY THINGS TO BE EATEN IN THE HOLY PLACE.**

**26. Only thy holy things which thou hast**—The tithes mentioned (*v.* 17) are not to be considered ordinary tithes which belonged to the Levites, and of which private Israelites had a right to eat; but they are other extraordinary tithes or gifts, which the people carried to the sanctuary to be presented as peace offerings, and on which, after being offered, and the allotted portion given to the priest, they feasted with their families and friends (*Leviticus*, 27. 30). **29-32. Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them. . . saying, how did these nations serve their gods?**—The Israelites, influenced by superstitious fear, too often endeavored to propitiate the deities of Canaan. Their Egyptian education had early impressed that bugbear notion of a set of local deities, who expected their dues from all who came to inhabit the country which they honored with their protection, and severely resented the neglect of payment in all new-comers. [WARB.] Taking into consideration the prevalence of this idea among them, we see that against an Egyptian influence was directed the full force of the wholesome caution with which this chapter closes.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1-5. **ENTICERS TO IDOLATRY TO BE PUT TO DEATH. I. If there arise amongst you a prophet**—The special counsels which follow arose out of the general precept contained in the last verse of the preceding chapter; and the purport of them is, that every attempt to seduce others from the course of duty which that divine standard of faith and worship prescribes must not only be strenuously resisted, but the seducer punished by the law of the land. This is exemplified in three cases of enticement to idolatry. **a prophet**—*i.e.*, some notable person laying claim to the character and authority of the prophetic office (*Numbers*, 12. 6; *1 Samuel*, 10. 6), performing feats of dexterity or power in support of his pretensions, or even predicting events which occurred as he foretold; as, for instance, an eclipse which a knowledge of natural science might enable him to anticipate (or, as Caiaphas, *John*, 18. 14). Should the aim of such a one be to seduce the people from the worship of the true God, he is an imposter, and must be put to death. No prodigy, however wonderful, no human authority, however great, should be allowed to shake their belief in the divine character and truth of a religion so solemnly taught and so awfully attested (*cf.* *Galatians*, 1. 8). The modern Jews appeal to this passage as justifying their rejection of

Jesus Christ. But he possessed all the characteristics of a true prophet, and he was so far from alienating the people from God and his worship, that the grand object of his ministry was to lead to a purer, more spiritual and perfect, observance of the law.

Ver. 6-18. **WITHOUT REGARD TO NEARNESS OF RELATION. 6. If thy brother...entice thee secretly**—This term being applied very loosely in all Eastern countries (Genesis, 20. 13), other expressions are added to intimate that no degree of kindred, however intimate, should be allowed to screen an enticer to idolatry; to conceal his crime, or protect his person; piety and duty must overcome the affection or compassion, and an accusation must be lodged before a magistrate. **9. thou shalt surely kill him**—not hastily, or in a private manner, but after trial and conviction; and his relative, as informer, was to cast the first stone (see on ch. 17. 7; Acts, 7. 58). It was manifest that what was done in secret could not be legally proved by a single informer; and hence Jewish writers say, that spies were set in some private part of the house, to hear the conversation and watch the conduct of a person suspected of Idolatrous tendencies. **12-18. certain men, the children of Belial**—lawless, designing demagogues (Judges, 19. 22; I Samuel, I. 16; 25. 25), who abused their influence to withdraw the inhabitants of the city to idol worship. **14. Then shalt thou inquire**—*i.e.*, the magistrate, to whom it officially belonged to make necessary investigation; and, in the event of the report proving true, the most summary proceedings were to be commenced against the apostate inhabitants. The law in this chapter has been represented as stern and sanguinary, but it was in accordance with the national constitution of Israel. God being their king, idolatry was treason, and a city turned to idols puts itself into a state, and incurred the punishment, of rebellion. **16. It shall be an heap for ever; It shall not be built again**—Its ruins shall be a permanent monument of the divine justice, and a beacon for the warning and terror of posterity. **17. There shall cleave naught of the cursed thing to thine hand**—No spoil shall be taken from a city thus solemnly devoted to destruction. Every living creature must be put to the sword—everything belonging to it reduced to ashes—that nothing but its infamy may remain.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1. 2. **GOD'S PEOPLE MUST NOT DISFIGURE THEMSELVES IN MOURNING. 1. Ye shall not cut yourselves...for the dead**—It was a common practice of idolators, both on ceremonious occasions of their worship (I Kings, 18. 28), and at funerals (cf. Jeremiah, 16. 6; 41. 5), to make ghastly incisions on their faces, and other parts of their persons, with their finger nails or sharp instruments. The making a large bare space between the eyebrows was another heathen custom in honor of the dead (see on Leviticus, 19. 27, 28; 21. 5). Such indecorous and degrading usages, being extravagant and unnatural expressions of hopeless sorrow (I Thessalonians, 4. 13) were to be carefully avoided by the Israelites, as derogatory to the character, and inconsistent with the position of those who were the people of God.



Ver. 3-21. WHAT MAY BE EATEN, AND WHAT NOT. **Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing**—*i.e.*, anything forbidden as unclean (see on Leviticus, II). Of BEASTS. **4-8. The hart**—(see on ch. 12. 15.) **fallow deer**—the Hebrew word (Jachmur) so rendered, does not represent the fallow deer, which is unknown in Western Asia, but an antelope (*Oryx Leucoryx*), called by the Arabs Jazmar. It is of white color, black at the extremities, and a bright red on the thighs. It was used at Solomon's table. **wild goat**—The word *akko* is different from that commonly used for a wild goat (I Samuel, 24. 2; Psalm 104. 18; Proverbs, 5. 19), and it is supposed to be a goat-deer, having the body of a stag, but the head, horns, and beard of a goat. An animal of this sort is found in the East, and called *Lerwee*. [SHAW'S TRAVELS.] **pygarg**—a species of antelope (*Oryx Addax*) with white buttocks, wreathed horns two feet in length, and standing about three feet seven inches high at the shoulders. It is common in the tracts which the Israelites had frequented. [SHAW.] **wild ox**—Supposed to be the Nubian *Oryx*, which differs from the *Oryx Leucoryx*, formerly mentioned, by its black color; and it is, moreover, of larger stature, and a more slender frame, with longer and more curved horns. It is called *Bekkar-El-Wash* by the Arabs. **chamois**—rendered by Sept. Cameleopard, but, by others who rightly judge it must have been an animal more familiar to the Hebrews, it is thought to be the *Kebesch* (*ovis Tragelaphus*), rather larger than a common sheep, covered not with wool, but with reddish hair—a Syrian sheep-goat. Of BIRDS. **11-20. Of all clean birds ye shall eat**—(see on Leviticus, II. 21.) **13. glede**—thought to be the same as that rendered *Vulture* (Leviticus, II. 14). **the cuckow**—more probably the sea-gull. **the swan**—rather the goose (Mich.). **gier-eagle**—The Hebrew word *Rachemah* is manifestly identical with *Rachamah*, the name which the Arabs give to the common vulture of Western Asia and Egypt. (*Neophron Percnopterus*.) **cormorant**—rather the *Plungeon*; a sea-fowl. **the lapwing**—the upupa or hoop; a beautiful bird, but of the most unclean habits. **21. Thou shalt not eat of any thing that dieth of itself**—(see on Leviticus, 17. 15; 22. 8.) **thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates**—not a proselyte, for he, as well as an Israelite, was subject to this law; but a heathen traveller or sojourner. **thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk**—This is the third place in which the prohibition is repeated. It was pointed against an annual pagan ceremony (see on Exodus, 23. 19; 34. 26). **22-27. Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed**—The dedication of a tenth part of the year's produce in every thing was then a religious duty. It was to be brought as an offering to the sanctuary; and, where distance prevented its being taken in kind, it was by this statute convertible into money. **28-29. At the end of three years the Levite shall come, etc.**—The Levites having no inheritance like the other tribes, the Israelites were not to forget them, but honestly to tithe their increase. Besides the tenth of all the landed produce, they had forty-eight cities, with the surrounding grounds, "the best of the land," and a certain proportion of the sacrifices as their allotted perquisites. They had, therefore, if not an affluent, yet a comfortable and independent, fund for their support.

## CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1-II. THE SEVENTH YEAR A YEAR OF RELEASE FOR THE POOR. **1. at the end of every seven years**—During the last of the seven, *i.e.*, the Sabbatical year (Exodus, 21. 2; 22. 11; Leviticus, 25. 4; Jeremiah, 33. 14). **2. Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it**—not by an absolute discharge of the debt, but by passing over that year without exacting payment. The relief was temporary and peculiar to that year, during which there was a total suspension of agricultural labor. **he shall not exact it of his brother**—*i.e.*, an Israelite, so called in opposition to a stranger or foreigner. **because it is called the Lord's release**—The reason for acquitting a debtor on that particular period proceeded from obedience to the command, and a regard to the honor of God; an acknowledgment of holding their property of Him, and gratitude for his kindness. **3. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again**—Admission to all the religious privileges of the Israelites was freely granted to heathen proselytes, though this spiritual incorporation did not always imply an equal participation of civil rights and privileges (Leviticus, 25. 44; Jeremiah, 34. 14; cf. 1 Chronicles, 22. 2; 2 Chronicles, 2. 17). **4. save when there shall be no poor man among you**—Apparently a qualifying clause added to limit the application of the foregoing statement; so that “the brother” to be released pointed to a *poor* borrower, whereas it is implied that if he were rich, the restoration of the loan might be demanded even during that year. But the words may properly be rendered (as on marg.) to the *end*, *in order that there may be no poor among you*—*i.e.*, that none be reduced to inconvenient straits and poverty by unseasonable exaction of debts, at a time when there was no labor and no produce, and that all may enjoy comfort and prosperity, which will be the case through the special blessing of God on the land, provided they are obedient. **7-II. If there be among you a poor man . . . thou shalt not harden thine heart**—Lest the foregoing law should prevent the Israelites lending to the poor, Moses here admonishes them against so mean and selfish a spirit, and exhorts them to give in a liberal spirit of charity and kindness, which will secure the divine blessing (Romans, 12. 8; 2 Corinthians, 9. 7). **II. For the poor shall never cease out of the land**—Although every Israelite on the conquest of Canaan, became the owner of property, yet in the providence of God who foresaw the event, it was permitted, partly as a punishment of disobedience, and partly for the exercise of benevolent and charitable feelings, that “the poor should never cease out of the land.”

**12-19. HEBREW SERVANTS' FREEDOM. 12. If thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee**—The last extremity of an insolvent debtor, when his house or land was not sufficient to cancel his debt, was to be sold as a slave with his family (Leviticus, 25. 39; 2 Kings, 4. 1; Nehemiah, 5. 1-13; Job, 24. 9; Matthew, 18. 25). The term of servitude could not last beyond six years; they obtained their freedom either after six years from the time of their sale, or before the end of the seventh year, and at the year of jubilee, such slaves were emancipated, although their six years of service were not completed. **13-15. Thou shalt not let him go away empty**—A seasonable and wise provision for enabling a poor unfortunate to regain his original status in

society, and the motive urged for his kindness and humanity to the Hebrew slave, was the remembrance that the whole nation was once a degraded and persecuted band of helots in Egypt. Thus, kindness towards their slaves, unparalleled elsewhere in those days, was inculcated by the Mosaic law; and in all their conduct towards persons in that reduced condition, leniency and gentleness were enforced by an appeal which no Israelite could resist. **16-17. If he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee**—If they declined to avail themselves of the privilege of release, and chose to remain with their master, then by a peculiar form of ceremony, they became a party to the transaction, voluntarily sold themselves to their employer and continued in his service till death. **18. he hath been worth a double-hired servant to thee**—*i.e.*, he is entitled to double wages, because his service was more advantageous to you, being both without wages and for a length of time, whereas hired servants were engaged yearly (Leviticus, 25. 53), or at most for three years (Isaiah, 16, 14). **19. All the firstling males of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God**—(See on Exodus, 22. 30). **thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock**—*i.e.*, the second firstlings (see on ch. 12. 17, 18; 14. 23).

## CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1-22. THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER. **1. Observe the month of Ahib**—or first-fruits. It comprehended the latter part of our March and the beginning of April. Green ears of the barley, which were then filled, were offered as first fruits, on the second day of the Passover. **for in the month of Ahib the Lord thy God brought thee out of Egypt by night**—This statement is apparently at variance with the prohibition. (Exodus, 12. 22) as well as with the recorded fact that their department took place in the *morning* (Exodus, 13. 3; Numbers, 33. 3). But it is susceptible of easy reconciliation. Pharaoh's permission, the first step of emancipation, was extorted during night, the preparations for departure commenced, the rendezvous at Rameses made, and the march entered on in the morning. **2. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover**—not the paschal lamb, which was strictly and properly the Passover. The whole solemnity is here meant, as is evident from the mention of the additional victims that required to be offered on the subsequent days of the feast (Numbers, 28. 18, 19; 2 Chronicles, 35. 8, 9), and from the allusion to the continued use of unleavened bread for seven days, whereas the Passover itself was to be eaten at once. The words before us are equivalent to "thou shalt observe the feast of the Passover." **thou shalt not eat unleavened bread**—a sour, unpleasant, unwholesome kind of bread, designed to be a memorial of their Egyptian misery, and of the haste with which they departed, not allowing time for their morning dough to ferment. **5. 6. Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates**—The Passover was to be observed nowhere but in the court of the tabernacle or temple, as it was not a religious feast or sacramental occasion merely, but an actual sacrifice (Exodus, 12. 27; 23. 18; 34. 25). The blood had to be sprinkled on the altar and in the place where the true Passover was afterwards to be sacrificed for us at even, at the going down of the sun—*lit.*, between the evenings. **at**

the season—*i.e.*, the month and day, though not perhaps the precise hour. The immense number of victims that had to be immolated on the eve of the Passover—*i.e.*, within a space of four hours—has appeared to some writer a great difficulty. But the large number of officiating priests, their dexterity and skill in the preparation of the sacrifices, the wide range of the court, the extraordinary dimensions of the altar of burnt-offering and orderly method of conducting the solemn ceremonial, rendered it easy to do that in a few hours, which would otherwise have required as many days. **7. thou shalt roast and eat it**—(See on Exodus, 12. 8; cf. 2 Chronicles, 35. 13). **thou shalt turn in the morning and go unto thy tents**—The sense of this passage, on the first glance of the words, seems to point to the morning after the first day—the Passover eve. Perhaps, however, the divinely-appointed duration of this feast, the solemn character and important object, the journey of the people from the distant parts of the land to be present, and the recorded examples of their continuing all the time (2 Chronicles, 30. 21: 35. 17), (though these may be considered extraordinary, and therefore exceptional occasions) may warrant the conclusion that the leave given to the people to return home was on the morning after the completion of the seven days. **9-12. Seven weeks shalt thou number**—The feast of weeks, or a WEEK OF WEEKS; the feast of Pentecost (see on Exodus, 34. 22; Leviticus, 23. 10; Acts, 2. 1). As on the second day of the Passover, a sheaf of new barley, reaped on purpose, was offered; so on the second day of Pentecost a sheaf of new wheat was presented as first-fruits (Exodus, 23. 16; Numbers, 28. 26), a free-will spontaneous tribute of gratitude to God for his temporal bounties. This feast was instituted in memory of the giving of the law, that spiritual food by which man's soul is nourished (Deuteronomy, 8. 3). **13-17. Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days**—(See on Exodus, 23. 16; Leviticus, 23. 34; Numbers, 29. 12). Various conjectures have been formed to account for the appointment of this feast at the conclusion of the whole harvest; some imagine that it was designed to remind the Israelites of the time when they had no corn fields to reap, but were daily supplied with manna; others think that it suited the convenience of the people better than any other period of the year for dwelling in booths; others that it was the time of Moses' second descent from the Mount; while a fourth class are of opinion that this feast was fixed to the time of the year when the word was made flesh and *dwelt; lit., tabernacled* amongst us (Joshua, 1. 14), Christ being actually born at that season. **in all the works of thine hands... rejoice**—*i.e.*, praising God with a warm and elevated heart. According to Jewish tradition, no marriages were allowed to be celebrated during these great festivals; that no personal or private rejoicings might be mingled with the demonstrations of public and national gladness. **16. Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God**—No *command* was laid on women to undertake the journeys, partly from regard to the natural weakness of their sex, and partly to their domestic cares. **18-20. Judges and officers shalt thou make**—these last meant heralds or bailiffs, employed in executing the sentence of their superiors. **in all thy gates**—The gate was the place of public resort among the Israelites and other Eastern people, where business was transacted and causes decided. The Ottoman Porte derived its name from the administration of justice at its gates. **21.**

**Thou shalt not plant thee a grove**—a grove has in Scripture a variety of significations—a group of overshadowing trees, or a grove adorned with altars dedicated to a particular deity, or a wooden image in a grove (Judges, 6. 25; 2 Kings, 23. 4-6). They might be placed near the earthen and temporary altars erected in the wilderness, but they could not exist either at the tabernacle or temples. They were places, which, with their usual accompaniments, presented strong allurements to idolatry, and therefore the Israelites were prohibited from planting them.

**22. neither shalt thou set up any image**—erroneously rendered so for "pillar;" pillars of various kinds, and materials of wood or stone were erected in the neighborhood of altars. Sometimes they were conical or oblong, or at other times they served as pedestals for the statutes of idols. A superstitious reverence was attached to them, and hence they were forbidden.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Ver, I. THINGS SACRIFICED MUST BE SOUND. **I. Thou shalt not sacrifice. . . any bullock or sheep wherein is blemish**—under the name of bullock were comprehended bulls, cows, and calves; under that of sheep, rams, lambs, kids, he and she goats. An ox, from mutilation, was inadmissible. The qualities required in animals destined for sacrifice are described (Exodus, 12. 5; Leviticus, 1. 3).

2-7. IDOLATORS MUST BE SLAIN. **2-7. If there be found among you any man or woman that hath wrought wickedness**—The grand object contemplated in choosing Israel was to preserve the knowledge and worship of the one true God, and hence idolatry of any kind, whether of the heavenly bodies or in some grosser kind, is called "a transgression of His covenant." No rank nor sex could palliate this crime. Every reported case, even a flying rumor of the perpetration of so heinous an offence was to be judicially examined, and if proved by the testimony of competent witnesses, the offender was to be taken without the gates and stoned to death, the witnesses casting the first stone at him. The object of this special arrangement was partly to deter the witnesses from making a rash accusation by the prominent part they had to act as executioners, and partly to give a public assurance that the crime had met its due punishment.

8-13. THE PRIESTS AND JUDGES TO DETERMINE CONTROVERSIES. **8-13. if there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment**—In all civil or criminal cases, where there was any doubt or difficulty in giving a decision, the local magistrates were to submit them by reference to the tribunal of the Sanhedrim—the supreme council, which was composed partly of civil and partly of ecclesiastical persons. "The priests and Levites,"—should rather be "the priests—the Levites;" *i.e.*, the Levitical priests, including the High priest, who were members of the Legislative assembly; and who, as forming one body, are called "the judge." Their sittings were held in the neighborhood of the sanctuary, because in great emergencies the high priest had to consult God by Urim (Numbers, 27. 21). From their judgment there was no appeal; and if a person were so perverse and refractory as to refuse obedience to their sentences, his conduct as inconsistent with the maintenance of order and

good government was then to be regarded and punished as a capital crime.

**14-20. THE ELECTION AND DUTY OF A KING. 14-20. When ye shall say, I will set a king over me**—In the following passage Moses *prophetically* announces a revolution which should occur at a later period in the national history of Israel. No sanction or recommendation was indicated; on the contrary, when the popular clamor had effected that constitutional change on the Theocracy by the appointment of a king, the divine disapproval was expressed in the most unequivocal terms (1 Samuel, 8. 7). Permission at length was granted, God reserving to himself the nomination of the family and the person who should be elevated to the regal dignity (1 Samuel, 9. 15; 10. 24; 16. 12; 1 Chronicles, 28. 4). In short, Moses, foreseeing that his ignorant and fickle countrymen, insensible to their advantages as a peculiar people, would soon wish to change their constitution and be like other nations, provides to a certain extent for such an emergency, and lays down the principles on which a king in Israel must act. He was to possess certain indispensable requisites; he was to be an Israelite, of the same race and religion, to preserve the purity of the established worship, as well as be a type of Christ, a spiritual king one of their brethren. **15. thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother**—*i.e.*, by their free and voluntary choice. But God, in the retributions of His providence, did allow foreign princes to usurp the dominion (Jeremiah, 38. 17; Matthew, 22. 17). **16. He shall not multiply horses to himself**—The use of these animals was not absolutely prohibited, nor is there any reason to conclude that they might not be employed as part of the state equipage. But the multiplication of horses would inevitably lead to many evils, to increased intercourse with foreign nations, especially with Egypt, to the importation of an animal to which the character of the country was not suited, to the establishment of an Oriental military despotism, to proud and pompous parade in peace, to a dependence upon Egypt in time of war, and a consequent withdrawal of trust and confidence in God (2 Samuel, 8. 4; 1 Kings, 10. 26; 2 Chronicles, 1. 16; 9. 28; Isaiah, 31. 3). **17. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away**—There were the strongest reasons for recording an express prohibition on this point, founded on the practice of neighboring countries in which polygamy prevailed, and whose kings had numerous harems; besides the monarch of Israel was to be absolutely independent of the people, and had nothing but the divine law to restrain his passions. The mischievous effects resulting from the breach of this condition were exemplified in the history of Solomon and other princes who, by trampling on the restrictive law, corrupted themselves as well as the nation. **neither shall he multiply silver and gold**—*i.e.*, the kings were forbidden to accumulate money for private purposes. **18-20. he shall write him a copy of this law in a book**—The original scroll of the ancient Scriptures was deposited in the sanctuary under the strict custody of the priests (see on ch. 31. 26; 2 Kings, 22. 8). Each monarch, on his accession, was to be furnished with a true and faithful copy, which he was to keep constantly beside him, and daily peruse it, that his character and sentiments being cast into its sanctifying mould, he might discharge his royal functions in the spirit of faith and piety, of humility and a love of righteousness. **that he may prolong his days, he and his children in**

**his kingdom**—From this it appears that the crown in Israel was to be hereditary, unless forfeited by personal crime.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**Ver. 1-8. THE LORD IS THE PRIESTS' AND THE LEVITES' INHERITANCE. 1. The Priests, the Levites shall eat the offerings**—As the tribe of Levi had no inheritance allotted them like the other tribes, but were wholly consecrated to the priestly office, their maintenance was to arise from tithes, first-fruits, and certain portions of the oblations presented on the altar, which God having by express appointment reserved to himself, made over, after being offered to His ministers. **3. This shall be the priests' due from the people**—All who offered sacrifices of thanksgiving or peace-offerings (Leviticus, 7. 31-33) were ordered to give the breast and shoulder as perquisites to the priests. Here "the two cheeks" and head, and "the maw" or stomach, deemed anciently a great dainty, are specified. But whether this is a new injunction, or a repetition of the old, with the supplement of more details, it is not easy to determine. **6-8. If a Levite... come with all the desire of his mind**—It appears that the Levites served in rotation from the earliest times; but, from their great numbers, it was only at distant intervals they could be called into actual service. Should any Levite, however, under the influence of eminent piety, resolve to devote himself wholly and continually to the sacred duties of the sanctuary, he was allowed to realize his ardent wishes; and as he was admitted to a share of the work, so also to a share of the remuneration. Though he might have a private property, that was to form no ground for withholding or even diminishing his claim to maintenance like the other ministering priests. The reason or principle of the enactment is obvious (1 Corinthians, 9. 13). At the same time, while every facility was afforded for the admission of such a zealous and self-denying officer, this admission was to be in an orderly manner; he was to minister "as all his brethren"—*i.e.*, a Gershonite with Gershonites; a Merarite with Merarites; so that there might be no disarrangement of the established courses.

**9-14. THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE NATIONS ARE TO BE AVOIDED. 9-14. Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations**—(See on Leviticus, 18. 21; 19. 26-31; 20. 6). In spite of this express command, the people of Canaan, especially the Philistines, were a constant snare and stumbling-block to the Israelites, on account of their divinations and superstitious practices.

**15-19. CHRIST THE PROPHET IS TO BE HEARD. 15-19. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet**—The insertion of this promise in connection with the preceding prohibition, might warrant the application which some make of it, to that order of true prophets whom God commissioned in unbroken succession to instruct, to direct, and warn his people; and in this view the purport of it is, "there is no need to consult with diviners and soothsayers, as I shall afford you the benefit of divinely-appointed prophets, for judging of whose credentials a sure criterion is given" (*vs.* 20, 22). But the prophet here promised was pre-eminently the Messiah, for He alone was "like unto Moses (see on ch. 34. 10) in his Mediatorial character; in the peculiar excellence of his

ministry; in the number, variety, and magnitude of his miracles; in his close and familiar communion with God; and in His being the author of a new dispensation of religion." This prediction was fulfilled 1500 years afterwards, and was expressly applied to Jesus Christ by Peter (Acts, 3. 22, 23) and by Stephen (Acts, 7. 37). **19. whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him**—The direful consequences of unbelief in Christ, and disregard of his mission, the Jewish people have been experiencing during 1800 years.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1-13. OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE. **2. Thou shalt separate three cities in the midst of thy land**—Goelism, or the duty of the nearest kinsman to avenge the death of a slaughtered relative, being the consuetudinary law of that age, as it still is among the Arabs and other people of the East, Moses incorporated it in an improved form with his legislative code. For the protection of the unintentional homicide, he provided certain cities of refuge;—three had been destined for this purpose on the East of Jordan (ch. 4. 41; Numbers, 35. 11); three were to be invested with the same privilege on the west of that river when Canaan should be conquered. **in the midst of the land**—in such a position that they would be conspicuous and accessible, and equi-distant from the extremities of the land and from each other. **3. Thou shalt prepare thee a way**—The road leading to them were to be kept in good condition, and the brooks or rivers to be spanned by good bridges; the width of the roads was to be 32 cubits; and at all the cross roads, sign-posts were to be erected with the words, *Mekeleth, Mekeleth*, "refuge, refuge," painted on them. **divide the coasts of thy land into three parts**—the whole extent of the country from the south to the north; the three cities on each side of Jordan were opposite to each other "as two rows of vines in a vineyard" (see on Joshua, 20. 7, 8). **6. Lest the avenger of blood pursue the slayer while his heart is hot**—This verse is a continuation of the third (for vs. 4, 5, which are explanatory, are in a parenthetical form), and the meaning is, that if the kinsman of a person inadvertently killed, should, under the impulse of sudden excitement, and without inquiring into the circumstances, inflict summary vengeance on the homicide, however guiltless, the law tolerated such an act; it was to pass with impunity. But to prevent such precipitate measures, the cities of refuge were established for the reception of the homicide, that "innocent blood might not be shed in thy land" (v. 10). In the case of premeditated murder (vs. 11, 12) they afforded no immunity; but, if it were only manslaughter, the moment the fugitive was within the gates, he found himself in a safe asylum (Numbers, 35. 26-28; Joshua, 20. 6). **8, 9. And if the Lord enlarge thy coast**—Three additional sanctuaries were to be established in the event of their territory extending over the country from Hermon and Gilead to the Euphrates. (See on Genesis, 15. 18; Exodus, 23. 31.) But it was obscurely hinted that this last provision would never be carried into effect, as the Israelites would not fulfil the conditions, viz., "that of keeping the commandments, to love the Lord, and walk ever in his ways." In point of fact, although that region was brought into subjection by David and Solomon, we do not



find that cities of refuge were established; because those sovereigns only made the ancient inhabitants tributary, instead of sending a colony of Israelites to possess it. The privilege of sanctuary cities, however, was given only for Israelites; and besides, that conquered territory did not remain long under the power of the Hebrew kings.

14. THE LAND-MARK IS NOT TO BE REMOVED. **14. Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's land-mark which they of old have set in thine inheritance**—The state of Palestine in regard to enclosures is very much the same now as it has always been. Though gardens and vineyards are surrounded by dry stone walls or hedges of prickly-pear, the boundaries of arable fields are marked by nothing but by a little trench, a small cairn, or a single erect stone, placed at certain intervals. It is manifest that a dishonest person could easily fill the gutter with earth, or remove these stones a few feet without much risk of detection, and enlarge his own field by a stealthy encroachment on his neighbor's. This law, then, was made to prevent such trespasses.

15-21. TWO WITNESSES REQUIRED. **15. One witness shall not arise against a man for any iniquity**—The following rules to regulate the admission of testimony in public courts, are founded on the principles of natural justice. A single witness shall not be admitted to the condemnation of an accused person. PUNISHMENT OF A FALSE WITNESS. 16-21. But if convicted of perjury, it will be sufficient for his own condemnation, and his punishment shall be exactly the same as would have overtaken the object of his malignant prosecution (see on Exodus, 21. 24; Leviticus, 24. 20).

## CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1-20. THE PRIESTS' EXHORTATION TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE TO BATTLE. **1. When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies**—In the approaching invasion of Canaan, or in any just and defensive war, the Israelites had reason to expect the presence and favor of God. **2. when ye come nigh unto the battle, the priest shall approach and speak unto the people**—Jewish writers say that there was a war priest appointed by a special ceremonial to attend the army. It was natural that the solemn objects and motives of religion should have been applied to animate patriotism, and give additional impulse to valor; other people have done this. But in the case of Israel, the regular attendance of a priest on the battle-field was in accordance with their Theocratic government, in which everything was done directly by God through his delegated ministers. It was the province of this priest to sound the trumpets (Numbers, 10. 9; 31. 6), and he had others under him who repeated at the head of each battalion the exhortations which he addressed to the warriors in general. The speech (*vs.* 3, 4) is marked by a brevity and expressiveness admirably suited to the occasion, viz., when the men were drawn up in line. **4. Your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you**—according to Jewish writers, the ark was always taken into the field of combat. But there is no evidence of this in the sacred history: and it must have been a sufficient ground of encouragement to be assured that God was on their side. **5. the officers shall speak unto the people**—*lit.*, *Shoterim*, who are called

“scribes” or “overseers” (Exodus, 5. 6). They might be keepers of the muster-roll, or perhaps rather military heralds, whose duty it was to announce the orders of the generals (2 Chronicles, 26. 11). This proclamation (*vs.* 5, 8) must have been made previous to the priest’s address, as great disorder and inconvenience must have been occasioned if the serried ranks were broken by the departure of those to whom the privilege was granted. Four grounds of exemption are expressly mentioned:—1. The dedication of a new house which, as in all Oriental countries still, was an important event, and celebrated by festive and religious ceremonies; (Nehemiah, 12. 27) exemption for a year. 2. The planting of a vineyard. The fruit of the first three years being declared unfit for use, and the first fruits producible on the fourth, the exemption in this case lasted at least four years. 3. The betrothal of a wife, which was always a considerable time before marriage. It was deemed a great hardship to leave a house unfinished, a new property half cultivated, and a recently contracted marriage; and the exemptions allowed in these cases were founded on the principle that a man’s heart being deeply engrossed with something at a distance, he would not be very unthrustastic in the public service. 4. The ground of exemption was cowardice. From the composition of the Israelitish army, which was an irregular militia, all above twenty years being liable to serve, many, totally unfit for war, must have been called to the field; and it was therefore a prudential arrangement to rid the army of such unwarlike elements—persons who could render no efficient service, and the contagion of whose craven spirit might lead to panic and defeat. **9. they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people**—*i.e.*, when the exempted parties have withdrawn, the combatants shall be ranged in order of battle. **10-20. when thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it**—An important principle is here introduced into the war-law of Israel regarding the people they fought against, and the cities they besieged. With “the cities of those people which God doth give thee” in Canaan, it was to be a war of utter extermination (*vs.* 17, 18). But when on a just occasion, they went against other nations, they were first to make a proclamation of peace, which, if allowed by a surrender, the people would become dependent, and, in the relation of tributaries, the conquered nations would receive the highest blessings from alliance with the chosen people; they would be brought to the knowledge of Israel’s God and of Israel’s worship, as well as a participation of Israel’s priveleges. But if the besieged city refused to capitulate and be taken, a universal massacre was to be made of the males, while the women and children were to be preserved and kindly treated (*vs.* 13, 14). By this means a provision was made for a friendly and useful connection being established between the captors and the captives; and Israel, even through her conquest, would prove a blessing to the nation. **19. Thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them**—In a protracted siege, wood would be required for various purposes, both for military works and for fuel. But fruit-bearing trees were to be carefully spared; and, indeed, in warm countries like India, where the people live much more on fruit than we do, the destruction of a fruit tree is considered a sort of sacrilege. **20. thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee**—It is evident that some sort of military engines were intended; and accordingly we know, that in Egypt,

where the Israelites learnt their military tactics, the method of conducting a siege was by throwing up banks, and making advances with moveable towers, or with the testudo. [WILKINSON.]

## CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1-9. EXPIATION OF UNCERTAIN MURDER. **1. if one be found slain lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him—**

The ceremonies here ordained to be observed on the discovery of a slaughtered corpse shew the ideas of sanctity which the Mosaic law sought to associate with human blood, the horror which murder inspired, as well as the fears that were felt lest God should avenge it on the country at large, and the pollution which the land was supposed to contract from the effusion of innocent, unexpiated blood. According to Jewish writers, the Sanhedrim, taking charge of such a case, sent a deputation to examine the neighborhood, and, they having reported which was the nearest town to the spot where the body was found, an order was issued by their supreme authority to the elders or magistrates of that town, to provide the heifer at the civic expense, and go through the appointed ceremonial. The engagement of the public authorities in the work of expiation, the purchase of the victim heifer, the conducting it to a "rough valley" which might be at a considerable distance, and which, as the original implies, was a wady, a perennial stream, in the waters of which the polluting blood would be wiped away from the land, and a desert withal, incapable of cultivation; the washing of the hands, which was an ancient act symbolical of innocence; the whole of the ceremonial was calculated to make a deep impression on the Jewish, as well as on the Oriental mind generally; to stimulate the activity of the magistrates in the discharge of their official duties; to lead to the discovery of the criminal, and the repression of crime.

10-23. THE TREATMENT OF A CAPTIVE TAKEN TO WIFE. **10-14.**

**When thou goest to war and seest among the captives a beautiful woman that thou wouldest have her to be thy wife—**According to the war customs of all ancient nations, a female captive became the slave of the victor, who had the sole and unchallengeable control of right to her person. Moses improved this existing usage by special regulations on the subject. He enacted that, in the event of her master being captivated by her beauty, and contemplating a marriage with her, a month should be allowed to elapse, during which her perturbed feelings might be calmed, her mind reconciled to her altered condition, and she might bewail the loss of her parents, now to her the same as dead. A month was the usual period of mourning with the Jews, and the circumstances mentioned here were the signs of grief—the shaving of the head—the (not pairing, but *lit.*, doing, *i.e.*,) allowing the nails to grow uncut, the putting off her gorgeous dress in which ladies, on the eve of being captured, arrayed themselves to be the more attractive to their captors. The delay was full of humanity and kindness to the female slave, as well as a prudential measure to try the strength of her master's affections. If his love should afterwards cool, and he become indifferent to her person, he was not to lord it over her, neither to sell her in the slave-market, nor retain her in a subordinate condition in his house; but she was to

be free to go where her inclinations led her. **15-17. If a man have two wives, one beloved, the other hated**—In the original and all other translations, the words are rendered “have had,” referring to events that have already taken place; and that the “had” has, by some mistake, been omitted in our versions, seems highly probable from the other verbs being in the past tense—“hers that was hated,” not “hers that is hated;” evidently intimating that she (the first wife) was dead at the time referred to. Moses, therefore, does not here legislate upon the case of a man who has two wives at the same time, but on that of a man who has married twice in succession, the second wife after the decease of the first; and there was an obvious necessity for legislation in these circumstances; for the first wife who was hated, was dead, and the second wife, the favorite, was alive; and with the feelings of a step-mother, she would urge her husband to make her own son the heir. This case has no bearing upon polygamy, which there is no evidence that the Mosaic code legalized. **18-21. If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son**—A severe law was enacted in this case. But the consent of both parents was required as a prevention of any abuse of it; for it was reasonable to suppose that they would not both agree to a criminal information against their son, except from absolute necessity, arising from his inveterate and hopeless wickedness; and, in that view, the law was wise and salutary, as such a person would be a pest and nuisance to society. The punishment was that to which blasphemers were doomed; for parents are considered God’s representatives, and invested with a portion of his authority over their children. **22, 23. If a man have committed a sin, and thou hang him on a tree**—hanging was not a Hebrew form of execution—gibbeting is meant—but the body was not to be left to rot, or be a prey to ravenous birds; it was to be buried “that day,” either because the stench in a hot climate would corrupt the air, or the spectacle of an exposed corpse bring ceremonial defilement on the land.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1-4. OF HUMANITY TOWARD BRETHERN. **1. Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray and hide thyself from them, etc.**—“Brother” is a term of extensive application, comprehending persons of every description; not a relative, neighbor, or fellow-countryman only, but any human being, known or unknown, a foreigner, and even an enemy (Exodus, 23, 4). The duty inculcated is an act of common justice and charity, which, while it was taught by the law of nature, was more clearly and forcibly enjoined in the law delivered by God to His people. Indifference or dissimulation in the circumstances supposed, would not only be cruelty to the dumb animals, but a violation of the common rights of humanity; and therefore the dictates of natural feeling, and still more the authority of the divine law enjoined, that the lost or missing property of another should be taken care of by the finder, till a proper opportunity occurred of restoring it to the owner.

5-12. THE SEX TO BE DISTINGUISHED BY APPAREL. **5. The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment**—Though disguises were assumed at certain

times in heathen temples, it is probable that a reference was made to unbecoming levities practised in common life. They were properly forbidden; for the adoption of the habiliments of the one sex by the other is an outrage on decency, obliterates the distinctions of nature by fostering softness and effeminacy in the man, impudence and boldness in the woman, as well as levity and hypocrisy in both; and, in short, opens the door to an influx of so many evils, that all who wear the dress of another sex are pronounced "an abomination unto the Lord." **6. 7.**

**If a bird's nest chance to be before thee**—This is a beautiful instance of the humanizing spirit of the Mosaic law, in checking a tendency to wanton destructiveness, and encouraging a spirit of kind and compassionate tenderness to the tiniest creatures. But there was wisdom as well as humanity in the precept; for, as birds are well known to serve important uses in the economy of nature, the extirpation of a species, whether of edible or ravenous birds, must in any county be productive of serious evils. But Palestine, in particular, was situated in a climate which produced poisonous snakes and scorpions; and between deserts and mountains from which it would have been overrun with them, as well as immense swarms of flies, locusts, mice, and vermin of various kinds, if the birds which fed upon them were extirpated. [MICH.] Accordingly, the counsel given in this passage was wise as well as humane, to leave the hen undisturbed for the propagation of the species, while the taking of the brood occasionally was permitted as a check to too rapid an increase. **8. thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any fall from thence**—

The tops of houses in ancient Judea, as in the East still, were flat, being composed of branches or twigs laid across large beams, and covered with a cement of clay or strong plaster. They were surrounded by a parapet breast high; for as in summer the roof is a favorite resort for coolness, accidents would frequently happen from persons incautiously approaching the edge and falling into the street or court; hence it was a wise and prudent precaution in the Jewish legislator to provide, that a stone balustrade or timber railing round the roof should form an essential part of every new house. **9. Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds**—(See on Leviticus, 19. 19).

**10. thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together**—Whether this association, like the mixture of seeds, had been dictated by superstitious motives, and the prohibition was symbolical, designed to teach a moral lesson (2 Corinthians, 6. 14), may or may not have been the case. But the prohibition prevented a great inhumanity still occasionally practiced by the poorer sort in oriental countries. An ox and ass being of different species, and of very different characters, cannot associate comfortably, nor unite cheerfully in drawing a plough or a wagon. The ass being much smaller and his step shorter, there must be an unequal and irregular draught. Besides, the ass, from feeding on coarse and poisonous weeds, has a fetid breath, which its yoke-fellow seeks to avoid, not only as poisonous and offensive, but producing leanness, or, if long continued, death; and hence it has been observed always to hold away its head from the ass, and to pull only with one shoulder. **11. thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts**—

The essence of the crime (Zephaniah, 1. 8.) consisted, not in wearing a woollen and a linnen robe, but in the two stuffs being woven together, according to a favorite superstition of

ancient idolators, (see on Leviticus, 19. 19). **12. thou shalt not make thee fringes upon the four quarters**—or, according to some eminent Biblical interpreters, *tassels on the coverlet of the bed*. The precept is not the same as Numbers, 15. 38. **13-30. If a man take a wife, etc.**—The regulations that follow might be imperatively needful in the *then* situation of the Isreelites; and yet, it is not necessary that *we* should curiously and impertinently inquire into them. So far was it from being unworthy of God to leave such things upon record, that the enactments must heighten our admiration of His wisdom and goodness in the management of a people so perverse and so given to irregular passions. Nor is it a better argument that the Scriptures were not written by inspiration of God to object, that this passage, and others of a like nature, tend to corrupt the imagination, and will be abused by evil-disposed readers, than it is to say that the sun was not created by God, because its light *may* be abused by wicked men as an assistant in committing crimes which they have meditated. [HORNE.]

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. I-25. WHO MAY AND WHO MAY NOT ENTER INTO THE CONGREGATION. **I. he that is wounded, etc., shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.**—"To enter into the congregation of the Lord" means either admission to public honors and offices in the Church and State of Israel, or, in the case of foreigners, incorporation with that nation by marriage. The rule was, that strangers and foreigners, for fear of friendship or marriage connections with them leading the people into idolatry, were not admissible till their conversion to the Jewish faith. But this passage describes certain limitations of the general rule. The following parties were excluded from the full rights and privileges of citizenship:—1st, Eunuchs—it was a very ancient practice for parents in the east by various arts to mutilate their children, with a view of training them for service in the houses of the great. 2d, Bastards—such an indelible stigma in both these instances was designed as a discouragement to practices that were disgraceful, but too common from intercourse with foreigners. 3d, Ammonites and Mohabites were excluded—for without provocation they combined to engage a soothsayer to curse the Israelites; and further endeavored, by ensnaring them into the guilt and licentious abominations of idolatry, to seduce them from their allegiance to God. **even to the tenth generation shall they not enter**—Many eminent writers think that this law of exclusion was applicable only to males; at all events that a definite is used for an indefinite number (Nehemiah, 13. 1; Ruth, 4. 10; 2 Kings, 10. 2). Many of the Israelites being established on the east side of Jordan in the immediate neighborhood of those people, God raised this partition-wall between them to prevent the consequences of evil communications. 4th, More favor was to be shewn to Edomites and Egyptians—to the former from their near relationship to Israel; and to the latter, from their early hospitalities to the family of Jacob as well as the many acts of kindness rendered them by private Egyptians at the Exodus (Exodus, 12. 36). The grandchildren of Edomite or Egyptian proselytes were declared admissible to the full rights of citizenship as native Israelites;

and by this remarkable provision, God taught His people a practical lesson of generosity and gratitude for special deeds of kindness, to the forgetfulness of all the persecution and ill services sustained from those two nations. **9-14. When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, keep thee from every wicked thing**—From the excesses incident to camp life, as well as from habits of personal neglect and impurity. **15, 16. Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which has escaped from his master unto thee**—Evidently a servant of the Canaanites or some of the neighboring people, who was driven by tyrannical oppression, or induced, with a view of embracing the true religion, to take refuge in Israel. **19, 20. Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother . . . Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury**—The Israelites lived in a simple state of society, and hence they were encouraged to lend to each other in a friendly way, without any hope of gain. But the case was different with foreigners, who, engaged in trade and commerce, borrowed to enlarge their capital, and might reasonably be expected to pay interest on their loans. Besides, the distinction was admirably conducive to keeping the Israelites separate from the rest of the world. **21, 22. When thou vowest a vow**—(See on Numbers, 30. 2). **24, 25. When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure**—Vineyards, like corn-field mentioned in the next verse, were often unenclosed. In vine-growing countries grapes are amazingly cheap; and we need not wonder, therefore, that all within reach of a passer's arm was free,—the quantity plucked was a loss never felt by the proprietor, and it was a kindly privilege afforded to the poor and wayfaring man.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 1-22. OF DIVORCES. **1. When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes**—It appears that the practice of divorces was at this early period very prevalent amongst the Israelites, who had in all probability become familiar with it in Egypt. [LANE.] The usage being too deep-rooted to be soon or easily abolished, was tolerated by Moses (Matthew, 19. 8), but it was accompanied under the law with two conditions, which were calculated greatly to prevent the evils incident to the permitted system, viz.—1st, That the act of divorcement was to be certified on a written document, the preparation of which, with legal formality, would afford time for reflection and repentance; and 2d, That, in the event of the divorced wife being married to another husband, she could not, on the termination of that second marriage, be restored to her first husband, however desirous he might be to receive her. **5. When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go to war**—This law of exemption was founded on good policy, and was favorable to matrimony, as it afforded a full opportunity for the affections of the newly married pair being more firmly engaged, and it diminished or removed occasions for the divorces just mentioned. **6. No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge**—The "upper" stone being concave, covers the "nether" like a lid; and it has a small aperture, through which the corn is poured, as well as a handle by which it is turned. The propriety of the law was

founded on the custom of grinding corn every morning for daily consumption. If either of the stones, therefore, which composed the handmill was wanting, a person would be deprived of his necessary provision. **7. If a man be found stealing any of his brethren**—See on Exodus, 21. 16), **8, 9. Take heed in the plague of leprosy**—(See on Leviticus, 13. 14). **10-13. When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge**—The course recommended was, in kind and considerate regard, to spare the borrower's feelings. In the case of a poor man who had pledged his cloak, it was to be restored before night, as the poor in Eastern countries have commonly no other covering for wrapping themselves in when they go to sleep than the hyke or plaid they have worn during the day. **14, 15. Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy**—Hired servants in the East are paid at the close of the day, and for a master to defraud the laborer of his hire, or to withhold it wrongfully for a night, might have subjected a poor man with his family to suffering, and was therefore an injustice to be avoided (Leviticus, 19. 13). **16-18. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children**—The rule was addressed for the guidance of magistrates, and it established the equitable principle that none should be responsible for the crimes of others. **19-22. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field**—The grain pulled up by the roots or cut down with a sickle was laid in loose sheaves; the fruit of the olive was obtained by striking the branches with long poles, and the grape clusters, severed by a hook, were gathered in the hands of the vintager. Here is a beneficent provision for the poor. Every forgotten sheaf in the harvest-field was to lie; the olive tree was not to be beaten a second time; nor gleaning grapes to be gathered, in order that, in collecting what remained, the hearts of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow might be gladdened by the bounty of Providence.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Ver. 1-19. STRIPES MUST NOT EXCEED FORTY. **2. if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten**—In judicial sentences, which awarded punishment short of capital, scourging, like the Egyptian bastinado, was the most common form in which they were executed. The Mosaic law, however, introduced two important restrictions, viz.—1st, That the punishment should be inflicted in presence of the judge, instead of being dealt with in private by some heartless official; and 2d, That the maximum amount of it should be limited to forty stripes, instead of being awarded according to the arbitrary will or passion of the magistrate. The Egyptian, like Turkish and Chinese rulers, often applied the stick till they caused death or lameness for life. Of what the scourge consisted at first we are not informed; but in later times, when the Jews were exceedingly scrupulous in adhering to the letter of the law, and, for fear of miscalculation, were desirous of keeping within the prescribed limit, it was formed of three cords, terminating in leathern thongs, and thirteen strokes of this counted thirty-nine (2 Corinthians, 11. 24). **4. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn**—In Judea, as in modern Syria and Egypt, the larger grains were beaten out by the feet of oxen, which, yoked together, trode round day after day



the wide open spaces which form the threshing floors. The animals were allowed freely to pick up a mouthful, when they chose to do so; a wise as well as humane regulation, introduced by the law of Moses (cf. 1 Corinthians, 9. 9; 1 Timothy, 5. 17, 18). **5-10. the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall take her to wife**—This usage existed before the age of Moses (Genesis, 38. 8). But the Mosaic law rendered the custom obligatory (Matthew, 22. 25) on younger brothers, or the nearest kinsman, to marry the widow (Ruth, 4. 4), by associating the natural desire of perpetuating a brother's name, with the preservation of property in the Hebrew families and tribes. In the event of the younger brother declining to comply with the law, the widow brought her claim before the authorities of the place at a public assembly (the gate of the city), and he having declared his refusal, she was ordered to loose the thong of his shoe—a sign of degradation—following up that act by spitting on the ground—the strongest expression of ignominy and contempt amongst Eastern people. The shoe was kept by the magistrate as an evidence of the transaction, and the parties separated. **13-16. Thou shalt not have divers weights**—Weights were anciently made of stone, and are frequently used still by Eastern shop-keepers and traders, who take them out of the bag and put them in the balance. The man who is not cheated by the trader and his bag of divers weights must be blessed with more acuteness than most of his fellows [ROBERTS.] (cf. Proverbs, 16. 11; 20. 10). **17-19. Remember what Amalek did**—This cold-blooded and dastardly atrocity is not narrated in the previous history (Exodus, 17. 14). It was an unprovoked outrage on the laws of nature and humanity, as well as a daring defiance of that God who had so signally shewn His favor towards Israel (see on 1 Samuel, 15.; 27. 8; 30.).

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Ver. 1-15. THE CONFESSION OF HIM THAT OFFERETH THE BASKET OF FIRST-FRUITS. **2. Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth**—The Israelites in Canaan being God's tenants at will, were required to give Him tribute in the form of first-fruits and tithes. No Israelite was at liberty to use any productions of his fields, until he had presented the required offering. The tribute began to be exigible after the settlement in the promised land, and it was yearly repeated at one of the great feasts (Leviticus, 2. 14; 23. 10; 23. 15; Numbers, 28. 26; ch. 16. 9). Every master of a family carried it on his shoulders in a little basket of osier, peeled willow, or palm leaves, and brought it to the sanctuary. **5. Thou shalt say, A Syrian ready to perish was my father**—rather, a wandering Syrian. The ancestors of the Hebrews were nomad shepherds, either Syrians by birth as Abraham, or by long residence as Jacob; and when they were established as a nation in the possession of the promised land, it was to God's unmerited goodness they were indebted for their distinguished privileges and in token of gratitude they brought this basket of first-fruits. **11. thou shalt rejoice**—feasting with friends and the Levites, who were invited on such occasions to share in the cheerful festivities that followed oblations (ch. 12, 7; 16. 10-15). **12-15. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the**

**tithes of thine increase the third year**—Among the Hebrews there were two tithings. The first was appropriated to the Levites (Numbers, 18. 21). The second being the tenth of what remained was brought to Jerusalem in kind; or it was converted into money, and the owner on arriving in the capital, purchased sheep, bread, and oil (ch. 14. 22, 23). This was done for two years together. But this second tithing was eaten at home, and the third year distributed amongst the poor of the place at discretion (ch. 14. 28, 29). **13. Thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house**—This was a solemn declaration that nothing which should be devoted to the Divine service had been secretly reserved for personal use. **14. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning**—in a season of sorrow, which brought defilement on sacred things; under a pretence of poverty, and grudging to give any away to the poor.” **neither, for any unclean use**—*i.e.*, any common purpose, different from what God had appointed, and which would have been a desecration of it. **nor given ought thereof for the dead**—on any funeral service, or, to an *idol*, which is a dead thing.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Ver. 2-10. THE PEOPLE ARE TO WRITE THE LAW UPON STONES.

**2. It shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan**—day is often put for time; and it was not till some days after the passage, that the following instructions were acted upon. **thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster**—These stones were to be taken in their natural state, unhewn, and unpolished—the occasion on which they were used not admitting of long or elaborate preparation; and they were to be daubed over with paint or white wash, to render them more conspicuous. Stones and even rocks are seen in Egypt and the peninsula of Sinai, containing inscriptions made 3000 years ago, in paint or plaster. By some similar method those stones may have been inscribed, and it is most probably that Moses learned the art from the Egyptians. **3. Thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law**—It might be, as some think, the Decalogue; but a greater probability is, that it was “the blessings and curses” which comprised in fact an epitome of the law (Joshua, 8. 34). **5-10. there shalt thou build an altar . . . of whole stones**—The stones were to be in their natural state, as if a chisel would communicate pollution to them. The stony pile was to be so large as to contain all the conditions of the covenant, so elevated as to be visible to the whole congregation of Israel; and the religious ceremonial performed on the occasion was to consist first, of the elementary worship needed for sinful men; and secondly, of the peace-offerings, or lively, social feasts, that were suited to the happy people, whose God was the Lord. There were thus, the law which condemned, and the typical expiation—the two great principles of revealed religion.

Ver. 11-13. THE TRIBES DIVIDED ON GERIZIM AND EBAL. **11-13. these shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people . . . these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse**—Those long rocky ridges lay in the province of Samaria, and the peaks referred to were near Shechem (Nablous), rising in steep precipices, to the height of about 800 feet,

and separated by a green, well-watered valley; of about 500 yards wide. The people of Israel were here divided into two parts. On mount Gerizim (now Jebel-et-Tur) were stationed the descendants of Rachel and Leah, the two principal wives of Jacob, and to them was assigned the most pleasant and honorable office of pronouncing the benedictions; while on the twin hill of Ebal (now Imad-el-Deen) were placed the posterity of the two secondary wives, Zilpah and Bilhah, with those of Reuben, who had lost the primogeniture, and Zebulun, son of Leah, youngest son; to them were committed the necessary but painful duty of pronouncing the maledictions (see on Judges, 9. 7). The ceremony might have taken place on the lower spurs of the mountains, where they approach more closely to each other; and the curse observed was as follows:—Amid the silent expectations of the solemn assembly, the priests standing round the ark in the valley below, said aloud, looking to Gerizim, "Blessed is the man that maketh not any graven image," when the people ranged on that hill responded in full simultaneous shouts of "Amen;" then turning round to Ebal, they cried, "Cursed is the man that maketh any graven image;" to which those that covered the ridge answered, "Amen." The same course at every pause was followed with all the blessings and curses (see on Joshua, 8. 33, 34). These curses attended on disobedience to the divine will, which had been revealed as a law from heaven, be it observed, are given in the form of a *declaration*, not a *wish*, as the words should be rendered, "Cursed is he," and not "Cursed be he."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ver. 1-68. THE BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE. **I. If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God**—In this chapter the blessings and curses are enumerated at length, and in various minute details, so that on the first entrance of the Israelites into the land of promise, their whole destiny was laid before them, as it was to result from their obedience or the contrary. **2-6. All these blessings shall come on thee**—their national obedience was to be rewarded by extraordinary and universal prosperity. **7. flee before thee seven ways**—*i.e.*, in various directions, as always happens in a rout. **10. called by the name of the Lord**—*i.e.*, are really and actually His people (ch. 14. 1; 26. 18). **11. The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods**—Beside the natural capabilities of Canaan, its extraordinary fruitfulness was traceable to the special blessing of heaven. **12. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure**—The seasonable supply of the early and latter rain was one of the principal means by which their land was so uncommonly fruitful. **thou shalt lend unto many nations, and shall not borrow**—*i.e.*, thou shalt be in such affluent circumstances, as to be capable, out of thy superfluous wealth, to give aid to thy poorer neighbors. **13, 14. the head and not the tail**—an Oriental form of expression, indicating the possession of independent power and great dignity and acknowledged excellence (Isaiah, 9. 14; 19. 15). **15-20. But if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord**—Curses that were to follow them in the event of disobedience are now enumerated, and they are almost exact counterparts to the blessings which were described in the

preceding context, as the reward of a faithful adherence to the covenant.

**21. pestilence**—some fatal epidemic; there is no reason, however, to think that the plague, which is the great modern scourge of the East, is referred to. **22. a consumption**—a wasting disorder; but the European phthisis is almost unknown in Asia. **fever...inflammation...extreme burning**—(fever is rendered “burning ague,” Lev. 26. 16), and the others mentioned along with it, evidently point to those febrile affections which are of malignant character and great frequency in the East. **the sword**—rather “dryness,”—the effect on the human body of such violent disorders. **blasting and mildew**—two atmospheric influences fatal to grain. **23. heaven...brass...earth...iron**—strong Oriental figures used to describe the effect of long-continued drought; and this want of regular and seasonable rain is allowed by the most intelligent observers, to be one great cause of the present sterility of Palestine. **24. the rain of thy land powder and dust**—An allusion probably to the dreadful effects of tornadoes in the East, which, raising the sand in immense twisted pillars, drive them along with the fury of a tempest. These shifting sands are most destructive to cultivated lands; and in consequence of their encroachment, many once fertile regions of the East are now barren deserts. **27. the botch of Egypt**—a troublesome eruption, marked by red pimples, to which, at the rising of the Nile, the Egyptians are subject. **emerods**—fistula or piles, **scab**—scurvy. **itch**—the disease commonly known by that name; but it is far more malignant in the East than is ever witnessed in our part of the world. **28. madness, blindness, and astonishment of heart**—they would be bewildered and paralyzed with terror at the extent of their calamities. **29-33. thou shalt grope at noonday**—a general description of the painful uncertainty in which they would live. During the middle ages the Jews were driven from society into hiding places which they were afraid to leave, not knowing from what quarter they might be assailed, and their children dragged into captivity, from which no friend could rescue, and no money ransom them. **35. the Lord shall smite thee in the knees and in the legs**—this is an exact description of elephantiasis, a horrible disease, something like leprosy, which attacks particularly the lower extremities. **36. The Lord shall bring thee and thy king**—This shows how wide-spread would be the range of the national calamity; and at the same time how hopeless, when he who should have been their defender shared the captive fate of his subjects. **there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone**—The Hebrew exiles, with some honorable exceptions, were seduced, or compelled into idolatry in the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities (Jeremiah, 44. 17-19). Thus, the sin to which they had too often betrayed a perverse fondness, a deep-rooted propensity,—became their punishment and their misery. **37. thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall, etc.**—The annals of almost every nation, for 1800 years, afford abundant proofs that this has been, as it still is, the case; the very name of Jew being a universally recognised term for extreme degradation and wretchedness. **49. the Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far**—The invasion of the Romans—“they came from far.” The soldiers of the invading army were taken from France, Spain, and Britain,—then considered “the end of the earth.” Julius Severus, the commander, afterwards Vespasian and

Hadrian, left Britain for the scene of contest. Moreover, the ensign on the standards of the Roman army was "an eagle;" and the dialects spoken by the soldiers of the different nations that composed that army were altogether unintelligible to the Jews. **50. A nation of fierce countenance**—A just description of the Romans who were not only bold and unyielding, but ruthless and implacable. **51. he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, etc.**—According to the Jewish historian, every district of the country through which they passed was strewed with the wrecks of their devastations. **52. He shall besiege thee until thy high and fenced walls come down**—All the fortified places to which the people betook themselves for safety, were burnt or demolished, and the walls of Jerusalem itself razed to the ground. **53-57. thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body**—(See on 2 Kings, 6. 29; Lamentations, 4. 10). Such were the dreadful extremities to which the inhabitants during the siege were reduced, that many women sustained a wretched existence by eating the flesh of their own children. Parental affection was extinguished, and the nearest relatives were jealously avoided lest they should discover and demand a share of the revolting viands. **62. ye shall be few in number**—There has been, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, only an inconsiderable remnant of Jews existing in that land—aliens in the land of their fathers; and of all classes of the inhabitants, they are the most degraded and miserable beings, dependent for their support on contributions from Europe. **63. ye shall be plucked from off the land**—Hadrian issued a proclamation, forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines. **64. The Lord shall scatter thee among all people**—There is, perhaps, not a country in the world where Jews are not to be found. Who that looks on this condition of the Hebrews is not filled with awe, when he considers the fulfilment of this prophecy? **68. The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with shius**—The accomplishment of this prediction took place under Titus, when, according to Josephus, multitudes of Jews were transported in ships to the land of the Nile and sold as slaves. "Here, then, are instances of prophecies delivered above 3,000 years ago; and yet, as we see, being fulfilled in the world at this very time; and what stronger proofs can we desire of the divine legation of Moses? How these instances may affect others, I know not; but, for myself, I must acknowledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression; they are truly, as Moses foretold (*vs.* 45, 46) they would be, 'a sign and a wonder for ever.'" [BISHOP NEWTON.]

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Ver. 1-29. AN EXHORTATION TO OBEDIENCE. **1. These are the words of the covenant**—The discourse of Moses is continued, and the subject of that discourse was Israel's covenant with God—the privileges it conferred, and the obligations it imposed. **beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb**—It was substantially the same; but it was renewed now, in different circumstances. They had violated its conditions. Moses rehearses these, that they might have a better knowledge of its conditions, and be more disposed to comply with them. **2. Moses called unto all Israel, Ye have seen all that the Lord did,**

**etc.**—This appeal to the experience of the people, though made generally, was applicable only to that portion of them who had been very young at the period of the Exodus, and who remembered the marvellous transactions that preceded and followed that era. Yet, alas! those wonderful events made no good impression upon them (*v.* 4). They were strangers to that grace of wisdom which is liberally given to all who ask it; and their insensibility was all the more inexcusable that so many miracles had been performed which might have led to a certain conviction of the presence and the power of God with them. The preservation of their clothes and shoes, the supply of daily food and fresh water; these, continued without interruption or diminution during so many years' sojourn in the desert, were miracles which unmistakably proclaimed the immediate hand of God, and were performed for the express purpose of training them to a practical knowledge of, and habitual confidence in, Him. Their experience of this extraordinary goodness and care, together with their remembrance of the brilliant successes by which, with little exertion or loss on their part, God enabled them to acquire the valuable territory on which they stood, is mentioned again to enforce a faithful adherence to the covenant, as the direct and sure means of obtaining its promised blessings. **10-29. Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord**—The whole congregation of Israel, of all ages and conditions, all—young as well as old; menials as well as masters; native Israelites as well as naturalized strangers; all were assembled before the tabernacle to renew the *Sinaitic* covenant. None of them were allowed to consider themselves as exempt from the terms of that national compact, lest any lapsing into idolatry might prove a root of bitterness, spreading its noxious seed and corrupt influence all around (*cf.* Hebrews, 12. 15). It was of the greatest consequence thus to reach the heart and conscience of every one, for some might delude themselves with vain the idea, that by taking the oath (*v.* 12) by which they engaged themselves in covenant with God, they would secure its blessings; and even though they should not rigidly adhere to His worship and commands, but follow the devices and inclinations of their own hearts, yet that He would wink at such liberties and not punish them. It was of the greatest consequence to impress all with the strong and abiding conviction, that while the covenant of grace had special blessings belonging to it, it at the same time had curses in reserve for transgressors; the infliction of which would be as certain, as lasting and severe. This was the advantage contemplated in the law being rehearsed a second time. The picture of a once rich and flourishing region, blasted and doomed in consequence of the sins of its inhabitants, is very striking, and calculated to awaken awe in every reflecting mind. Such is, and long has been, the desolate state of Palestine; and, in looking at its ruined cities, its blasted coast, its naked mountains, its sterile and parched soil—all the sad and unmistakable evidences of a land lying under a curse, numbers of travellers from Europe, America, and the Indies—"strangers from a far country" (*v.* 22), in the present day see that the Lord has executed his threatening. Who can resist the conclusion that it has been inflicted "because the inhabitants had forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book?" **29. The secret things belong unto the**

**Lord**—This verse has no apparent connection with the thread of discourse; and it is thought to have been said in answer to the looks of astonishment or the words of inquiry, whether they would be ever so wicked, as to deserve such punishments. The recorded history of God's providential dealings towards Israel presents a wonderful combination of "goodness and severity." There is much of it involved in mystery too profound for our limited capacities to fathom; but, from the comprehensive wisdom displayed in those parts which have been made known to us, we are prepared to enter into the full spirit of the apostles' exclamation, how unsearchable are His judgments (Romans, 11. 33).

## CHAPTER XXX.

Ver. 1-10. GREAT MERCIES PROMISED UNTO THE PENITENT. 2, 3.

**When all these things are come upon thee, and thou shalt return... then the Lord shall turn thy captivity**—The hopes of the Hebrew people are ardently directed to this promise, and they confidently expect that God, commiserating their forlorn and fallen condition, will yet rescue them from all the evils of their long dispersion. They do not consider the promise as fulfilled by their restoration from the captivity in Babylon, for Israel was not then scattered in the manner here described—"among all the nations," "unto the utmost parts of heaven" (v. 4); and when God recalled them from that bondage, all the Israelites were not brought back, they were not multiplied above their fathers (v. 5), nor were their hearts and those of their children circumcised to love the Lord (v. 6). It is not, therefore, of the Babylonish captivity, that Moses was speaking in this passage; it must be of the dispersed state to which they have been doomed for 1800 years. This prediction may have been partially accomplished on the return of the Israelites from Babylon; for, according to the structure and design of Scripture prophecy, it may have pointed to several similar eras in their national history; and this view is sanctioned by the prayer of Nehemiah (Nehemiah, 1. 8, 9). But undoubtedly it will receive its full and complete accomplishment in the conversion of the Jews to the Gospel of Christ. At the restoration from the Babylonish captivity, that people were changed in many respects for the better. They were completely weaned from sensible idolatry: and this outward reformation was a prelude to the higher attainments they are destined to reach in the age of Messiah, "when the Lord God will circumcise their hearts and the hearts of their seed to love the Lord." The course pointed out seems clearly to be this: that the hearts of the Hebrew people shall be circumcised (Colossians, 2. 2); in other words, by the combined influences of the Word and Spirit of God, their hearts will be touched and purified from all their superstition and unbelief; they will be converted to the faith of Jesus Christ as their Messiah—a spiritual deliverer, and the effect of their conversion will be that they will return and obey the voice (the Gospel, the Evangelical law) of the Lord. The words may be interpreted either wholly in a spiritual sense (John, 11. 51, 52), or, as many think, in a literal sense also (Romans, 11.). They will be recalled from all places of the dispersion to their own land, and enjoy the highest prosperity. The mercies and favors of a bountiful Providence will not

then be abused as formerly (ch. 31. 20; 32. 15). They will be received in a better spirit, and employed to nobler purposes. They will be happy, "for the Lord will again rejoice over them for good, as He rejoiced over their fathers."

11-14. THE COMMANDMENT IS MANIFEST. 11-14. **for this commandment is not hidden, neither far off**—That law of loving and obeying God which was the subject of Moses' discourse, was well known to the Israelites. They could not plead ignorance of its existence and requirements. It was not concealed as an impenetrable mystery in heaven, for it had been revealed; nor was it carefully withheld from the people as a dangerous discovery; for the youngest and humblest of them were instructed in those truths, which were subjects of earnest study and research among the wisest and greatest of other nations. They were not under a necessity of undertaking long journeys or distant voyages, as many ancient sages did in quest of knowledge. They enjoyed the peculiar privilege of a familiar acquaintance with it. It was with them a subject of common conversation, engraven on their memories, and frequently explained and inculcated on their hearts. The apostle Paul (Romans, 10. 6-8) has applied this passage to the Gospel, for the law of Christ is substantially the same as that of Moses, only exhibited more clearly in its spiritual nature and extensive application, and accompanied with the advantages of Gospel grace, is practicable and easy.

15-20. DEATH AND LIFE ARE SET BEFORE THE ISRAELITES. 15-20. **See, I have set before thee this day, life and death**—*i.e.*, the alternative of a good and happy, or a disobedient and miserable life. Love of God, and compliance with His will, is the only way of securing the blessings and avoiding the evils described. The choice was left to themselves, and in urging upon them the inducements to a wise choice, Moses warmed as he proceeded into a tone of solemn and impressive earnestness similar to that of Paul to the elders of Ephesus (Acts, 20. 26, 27).

## CHAPTER XXXI.

Ver. 1-8. MOSES ENCOURAGETH THE PEOPLE AND JOSHUA. 1. **Moses went and spake**—It is probable that this rehearsal of the law extended over several successive days; and it might be the last and most important day on which the return of Moses to the place of assembly is specially noticed. In drawing his discourse towards a conclusion, he adverted to his advanced age; and although neither his physical nor intellectual powers had suffered any decay (ch. 34. 7), yet he knew by a special revelation, that the time had arrived when he was about to be withdrawn from the superintendence and government of Israel. 2-8. **also the Lord hath said**—should be "*for* the Lord hath said" thou shalt not go over this Jordan. While taking a solemn leave of the people, he exhorted them not to be intimidated by the menacing opposition of enemies; to take encouragement from the continued presence of their covenanted God; and to rest assured that the same divine power which had enabled them to discomfit their first assailants on the East of Jordan, would aid them not less effectually in the adventurous enterprise which they were about to undertake, and by which they would obtain possession of "the land which He had sworn unto their fathers to give them."

9-13. HE DELIVERS THE LAW TO THE PRIESTS, TO READ IT EVERY



SEVENTH YEAR TO THE PEOPLE. **9-13. Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests**—The law thus committed to writing, was either the whole book of Deuteronomy, or the important part of it contained between the twenty-seventh and thirtieth chapters. It was usual in cases of public or private contract for two copies of the engagement to be made—one to be deposited in the national archives, or some secure place for reference, should occasion require; the other to remain in the hands of the contracting parties (Jeremiah, 32. 12-14). The same course was followed on this renewal of the covenant between God and Israel. Two written copies of the law were prepared, the one of which was delivered to the public representatives of Israel, viz., the priests and the elders. **the priests, who bare the ark of the covenant**—In all ordinary journeys, it was the common duty of the Levites to carry the ark and its furniture (Numbers, 4. 15); but, on solemn or extraordinary occasions, that office was discharged by the priests (Joshua, 3. 3-8; 6. 6; 1 Chronicles, 15. 11, 12). **all the elders of Israel**—they were assistants to the priests and overseers to take care of the preservation, rehearsal, and observance of the law. **10. At the end of every seven years, thou shalt read this law**—At the return of the Sabbatic year, and during the feast of Tabernacles, the law was to be publicly read. This order of Moses was a future and prospective arrangement; for the observance of the Sabbatic year did not commence till the conquest and peaceful occupation of Canaan. The ordinance was subservient to several important purposes. For, while the people had opportunities of being instructed in the law every Sabbath, and daily in their own homes, this public periodical rehearsal at meetings in the courts of the sanctuary, where women and children of twelve years were present, as they usually were at the great festivals, was calculated to produce good and pious impressions of divine truth amid the sacred associations of the time and place; besides, it formed a public guarantee for the preservation, integrity, and faithful transmission of the Sacred Book to successive ages. **14, 15. the Lord said unto Moses, Call Joshua, and present yourselves to the tabernacle of the congregation**—Joshua had been publicly designated to the office of commander by Moses; and God was pleased to confirm his appointment by the visible symbols of His presence and approval. As none but the priests were privileged to enter the sanctuary, it is probable that this significant manifestation of the cloudy pillar was made while the leaders stood at the door of the tabernacle. **16-22. The Lord said unto Moses. . . This people will rise up**—In this remarkable interview, Moses was distinctly apprized of the infidelity of Israel, their corruptions of the true religion through intercourse with the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan (Amos, 5. 26), and their chastisements in consequence of those national defections. **17. Then my anger shall be kindled, and I will hide my face from them**—An announcement of the withdrawal of the divine favor and protection of which the Shechinah was the symbol and pledge. It never appeared in the second temple; and its non-appearance was a prelude of "all the evils that came upon them, because their God was not among them." **19. Now therefore write ye this song**—National songs take deep hold of the memories, and have a powerful influence in stirring the deepest feelings of a people; and in accordance with this principle in human nature, a song was ordered to be composed by Moses, doubtless under Divine inspiration, which was

to be learnt by the Israelites themselves, and to be taught to their children in every age, embodying the substance of the preceding addresses, and of a strain well suited to inspire the popular mind with a strong sense of God's favor to their nation. **26. Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark**—The second copy of the law (see on *v.* 9) was deposited for greater security and reverence in a little chest *beside* the ark of the covenant, for there was nothing contained within it but the tables of stone (1 Kings, 8. 9). Others think that it was put *within* the ark, it being certain, from the testimony of Paul (Hebrews, 9. 4), that there were once other things inside the ark, and that this was the copy found in the time of Josiah (2 Kings, 22. 8).

## CHAPTER XXXII.

Ver. 1-43. MOSES' SONG, WHICH SETS FORTH THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD. **1. Give ear, O ye heavens; hear, O earth**—The magnificence of the exordium, the grandeur of the theme, the frequent and sudden transitions, the elevated strain of the sentiments and language, entitle this song to be ranked amongst the noblest specimens of poetry to be found in the Scriptures. **2, 3. My doctrine shall drop, etc.**—the language may justly be taken as uttered in the form of a wish or prayer, and the comparison of wholesome instruction to the pure, gentle, and insinuating influence of rain or dew, is frequently made by the sacred writers (Isaiah, 5. 6; 55. 10, 11). **4. He is the Rock**—a word expressive of power and stability. The application of it in this passage is to declare that God had been true to His covenant with their fathers and them. Nothing that he had promised had failed; so that if their national experience had been painfully chequered by severe and protracted trials, notwithstanding the brightest promises, that result was traceable to their own undutiful and perverse conduct; not to any vacillation or unfaithfulness on the part of God (James, 1. 17), whose procedure was marked by justice and judgment, whether they had been exalted to prosperity, or plunged into the depths of affliction. **5. They have corrupted themselves**—*i.e.*, the Israelites, by their frequent lapses and their inveterate attachment to idolatry. **their spot is not the spot of his children**—This is an allusion to the marks which idolators inscribe on their foreheads or their arms, with paint or other substances, in various colors and forms, straight, oval, or circular, according to the favorite idol of their worship. **6. Is He not thy father that bought thee**—or emancipated thee from Egyptian bondage. **and made thee**—advanced the nation to unprecedented and peculiar privileges. **8, 9. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance**—In the division of the earth, which Noah is believed to have made by divine direction (Genesis, 10. 5; ch. 2. 5-9; Acts, 17. 26, 27), Palestine was reserved by the wisdom and goodness of heaven for the possession of his peculiar people, and the display of the most stupendous wonders. The theatre was small, but admirably situated for the convenient observation of the human race—at the junction of the two great continents of Asia and Africa, and almost within sight of Europe. From this spot as from a common centre, the report of God's wonderful works, the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience and sufferings of his own eternal Son, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe. **He set the bounds of the**

people according to the number of the children of Israel—Another rendering, which has received the sanction of eminent scholars, has been proposed as follows:—"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, and set the bounds of every people, the children of Israel were few in numbers, when the Lord chose that people and made Jacob His inheritance" (cf. ch. 30. 5; Genesis, 34. 30; Psalm 105. 9-12). **10. found him in a desert land**—took him into a covenant relation at Sinai, or rather "sustained," "provided for him" in a desert land. **a waste howling wilderness**—a common Oriental expression for a desert infested by wild beasts. **11. as an eagle fluttereth over her young**—This beautiful and expressive metaphor is founded on the extraordinary care and attachment which the female eagle cherishes for her young. When her newly fledged progeny are sufficiently advanced to soar in their native element, she, in their first attempts at flying, supports them on the tip of her wing, encouraging, directing, and aiding their feeble efforts to longer and sublimer flights. So did God take the most tender and powerful care of His chosen people: He carried them out of Egypt and led them through all the horrors of the wilderness to the promised inheritance. **13, 14. He made him ride on the high places, etc.**—All these expressions seem to have peculiar reference to their home in the trans-Jordanic territory; that being the whole of Palestine that they had seen at the time when Moses is represented as uttering these words—"the high places" and "the fields" are specially applicable to the table lands of Gilead; and still more, the allusions to the herds and flocks,—the honey of the wild bees which hive in the crevices of the rocks, the oil from the olive as it grew, singly or in small clumps, on the tops of hills, where scarcely anything else would grow, the finest wheat (Psalm 81. 16; 147. 14) and the prolific vintage. **15. But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked**—This is a poetical name for Israel. The metaphor here used is derived from a pampered animal which, instead of being tame and gentle, becomes mischievous and vicious, in consequence of good living and kind treatment. So did the Israelites conduct themselves; by their various acts of rebellion, murmuring, and idolatrous apostasy. **17. They sacrificed unto devils**—(See on Leviticus, 17. 7). **21. those which are not a people**—*i.e.*, not favored with such great and peculiar privileges as the Israelites, or rather poor, despised heathens; the language points to the future calling of the Gentiles. **23. I will spend mine arrows upon them**—war, famine, pestilence (Psalm 77. 17), are called in Scripture the arrows of the Almighty. **29. O that they would consider their latter end**—the terrible judgments, which, in the event of their continued and incorrigible disobedience, would impart so awful a character to the close of their national history. **32. vine of Sodom... grapes of gall**—This fruit, which the Arabs call "Lot's Sea Orange," is of a bright yellow color, and grows in clusters of three or four. When mellow, it is tempting in appearance, but on being struck, explodes like a puff-ball, consisting of skin and fibre only. **44-47. Moses spake all the words of this song in the ears, etc.**—Is has been beautifully styled "the Song of the Dying Swan." [LOWTH.] It was designed to be a national anthem, which it should be the duty and care of magistrates to make well known by frequent repetition, and animate the people to right sentiments towards a steadfast adherence to his service. **48-51. Get thee up and die, because**

**ye trespassed at Meribah**—(See on Numbers, 20. 12.) **52. Thou shalt see the land, but shalt not go thither**—(Numbers, 27. 12.) Notwithstanding so severe a disappointment, not a murmur or complaint escapes his lips; he is not only resigned but acquiescing; and in the near prospect of his death, he pours forth the feelings of his devout heart in sublime strains and eloquent blessings.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Ver. 1-28. THE MAJESTY OF GOD. **1. Moses, the man of God**—

This was a common designation of a prophet (1 Samuel, 2. 27; 9. 6), and it is here applied to Moses, when, like Jacob, he was about to deliver ministerially before his death, a prophetic benediction to Israel. **2-4. The Lord came**—under a beautiful metaphor, borrowed from the dawn and progressive splendor of the sun, the Majesty of God is sublimely described as a divine light which appeared in Sinai, and scattered its beams on all the adjoining region in directing Israel's march to Canaan. In these descriptions of a *theophania*, God is represented as coming from the south, and the allusion is in general to the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai; but other mountains in the same direction are mentioned with it. The location of Seir was on the East of the Ghor; Mount Paran was either the chain on the west of the Ghor, or rather the mountains on the southern border of the desert towards the peninsula. [ROBINSON,] (cf. Judges, 5. 4-5; Psalm 68. 7, 8; Habakkuk, 3. 3). **ten thousand saints**—rendered by some "with the ten thousand of Kadesh," or perhaps better still, "from Meribah-Kadesh." [EWALD.] **a fiery law**—so called both because of the thunder and lightning which accompanied its promulgation (Exodus, 19. 16-18; ch. 4. 11), and of the fierce unrelenting curse denounced against the violation of its precepts (1 Corinthians, 3. 7-9). Notwithstanding those awe-inspiring symbols of Majesty that were displayed on Sinai, the law was really given in kindness and love (*v.* 3) as a means of promoting both the temporal and eternal welfare of the people; and it was "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob," not only from the hereditary obligation under which that people were laid to observe it, but from its being the grand distinction, the peculiar privilege of the nation. **6. Let Reuben live and not die**—Although deprived of the honor and privileges of primogeniture, he was still to hold rank as one of the tribes of Israel. He was more numerous than several other tribes (Numbers, 1. 21; 2. 11), yet gradually sunk into a mere nomadic tribe, which had enough to do merely "to live and not die." Many eminent Biblical scholars, resting on the most ancient and approved manuscripts of the Septuagint, consider the latter clause as referring to Simeon; "and Simeon, let his men be few," a reading of the text which is in harmony with other statements of Scripture respecting this tribe (Numbers, 25. 6-14; 1. 23; 26. 14; Joshua, 19. 1). **7. This is the blessing of Judah**—Its general purport points to the great power and independence of Judah, as well as its taking the lead in all military expeditions. **8-10. Of Levi he said**—The burden of this blessing is the appointment of the Levites to the dignified and sacred office of the priesthood (Leviticus, 10. 11; ch. 22. 8: 17. 8-11); a reward for their zeal in supporting the cause of God, and their unsparing severity in chastising even their nearest and dearest relatives who had

participated in the idolatry of the molten calf (Exodus, 32. 26-28; cf. Malachi, 2. 4-6). **12. Of Benjamin he said**—A distinguishing favor was conferred on this tribe in having its portion assigned near the temple of God. **between his shoulders**—*i.e.*, on his sides or borders. Mount Zion, on which stood the city of Jerusalem, belonged to Judah; but Mount Moriah, the site of the sacred edifice, lay in the confines of Benjamin. **13-17. of Joseph he said**—The territory of this tribe, diversified by hill and dale, wood and water, would be rich in all the productions—olives, grapes, figs, etc., that are reared in a mountainous region as well as the grain and herbs that grow in the level fields. “The firstling of the bullock and the horns of the unicorn” (rhinoceros), indicate glory and strength, and it is supposed that under these emblems were shadowed forth the triumphs of Joshua and the new kingdom of Jeroboam, both of whom were of Ephraim (cf. Genesis, 48. 20). **18, 19. Zebulun, rejoice in thy going out**—on commercial enterprises and voyages by sea. **and Issachar in thy tents**—preferring to reside in their maritime towns. **shall suck of the abundance of the sea, and treasures hid in the sand**—Both tribes should traffic with the Phœnicians in gold and silver, pearl and coral, especially in *murex*, the shell-fish that yielded the famous Tyrian dye, and in glass, which was manufactured from the sand of the river Belus, in their immediate neighborhood. **20, 21. Of Gad he said**—Its possessions were larger than they would have been had they lain west of Jordan; and this tribe had the honor of being settled by Moses himself in the first portion of land conquered. In the forest region, south of the Jabbok, “he dwelt as a lion” (cf. Genesis, 30. 11; 49. 19). Notwithstanding, they faithfully kept their engagement to join the “heads of the people” in the invasion of Canaan. **22. Dan is a lion’s whelp**—His proper settlement in the south of Canaan being too small, he by a sudden and successful irruption, established a colony in the northern extremity of the land. This might well be described as the leap of a young lion from the hills of Bashan. **23. of Naphtali he said**—The pleasant and fertile territory of this tribe lay to “the west,” on the borders of lakes Merom and Chinnereth, and to “the south” of the northern Danites. **24, 25. of Asher he said**—The condition of this tribe is described as combining all the elements of earthly felicity—**dip his foot in oil**—These words allude either to the process of extracting the oil by foot presses, or to his district as particularly fertile, and adapted to the culture of the olive. **shoes of iron and brass**—These shoes suited his rocky coast from Carmel to Sidon. Country people as well as ancient warriors, had their lower extremities protected by metallic greaves (1 Samuel, 17. 6; Ephesians, 6. 15) and iron-soled-shoes. **26-29. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun**—The chapter concludes with a congratulatory address to Israel on their peculiar happiness and privilege in having Jehovah for their God and protector. **who rideth upon the heaven in thy help**—an evident allusion to the pillar of cloud and fire, which was both the guide and shelter of Israel. **28. the fountain of Jacob**—the posterity of Israel shall dwell in a blessed and favored land.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

Ver. 1-12. MOSES FROM MOUNT NEBO VIEWETH THE LAND. 1.

**Moses went up from the plains of Moab**—This chapter appears from internal evidence to have been written subsequently to the death of Moses, and it probably formed, at one time, an introduction to the book of Joshua. **unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah**—*lit.*, the head or summit of *the Pisgah*—*i.e.*, the height (cf. Numbers, 23. 14; ch. 3. 17-27; 4. 49). The general name given to the whole mountain range east of Jordan, was Abarim (cf. ch. 32. 49), and the peak to which Moses ascended was dedicated to the heathen Nebo, as Balaam's standing place had been consecrated to Peor. Some modern travellers have fixed on Jebel-Attarus, a high mountain south of the Jabbok (Zurka), as the Nebo of this passage. [BURCKHARDT, SEETZEN, ETC.] But it is situated too far north for a height which, being described as "over against Jericho," must be looked for above the last stage of the Jordan. **the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead**—That pastoral region was discernible at the northern extremity of the mountain-line on which he stood, till it ended, far beyond his sight, in Dan. Westward there were on the horizon, the distant hills "of all Naphtali." Coming nearer was "the land of Ephraim and Manasseh." Immediately opposite was "all the land of Judah," a title at first restricted to the portion of this tribe, beyond which were "the utmost sea," (the Mediterranean) and the desert of the "South." These were the four great marks of the future inheritance of his people, on which the narrative fixes our attention. Immediately below him was "the circle" of the plain of Jericho, with its oasis of palm trees; and far away on his left, the last inhabited spot before the great desert "Zoar." The foreground of the picture alone was clearly discernible. There was no miraculous power of vision imparted to Moses. That he should see all that is described, is what any man could do, if he attained sufficient elevation. The atmosphere of the climate is so subtle and free from vapor, that the sight is carried to a distance of which the beholder, who judges from the more dense air of Europe, can form no idea. [VERE MONRO.] But between him and that "good land" the deep valley of the Jordan intervened; "he was not to go over thither." **5. So Moses died**—After having governed the Israelites forty years. **6. he buried him**—or, "he was buried in a valley," *i.e.*, a ravine or gorge of the Pisgah. Some think that he entered a cave and there died, being according to an ancient tradition of Jews and Christians, buried by angels (Jude, 9; Numbers, 21. 20). **no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day**—This concealment seems to have been owing to a special and wise arrangement of Providence, to prevent its being ranked among "Holy places," and made the resort of superstitious pilgrims or idolatrous veneration, in after ages. **8. wept for Moses thirty days**—seven days was the usual period of mourning, but for persons of high rank or official eminence, it was extended to thirty (Genesis, 50. 3-10; Numbers, 20. 29). **9. Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom**—He was appointed to a peculiar and extraordinary office; he was not the successor of Moses, for he was not a prophet or civil ruler, but the general or leader, called to head the people in the war of invasion, and the subsequent allocation of the tribes. **10-12. there arose not a prophet since**—In whatever light we view this extraordinary man, the eulogy pronounced in these inspired words will appear just. No Hebrew prophet or ruler equalled him in character, official dignity as well as knowledge of God's will and opportunities of announcing it.

THE

# BOOK OF JOSHUA.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1-18. THE LORD APPOINTS JOSHUA TO SUCCEED MOSES. 1.

**Now after the death of Moses**—Joshua having been already appointed and designated leader of Israel (Numbers, 27, 18-23), in all probability assumed the reins of government *immediately* “after the death of Moses.” **the servant of the Lord**—this was the official title of Moses, as invested with a special mission to make known the will of God; and it conferred great honor and authority. **the Lord spake unto Joshua**—probably during the period of public mourning, and either by a direct revelation to the mind of Joshua, or by means of Urim and Thummim (Numbers, 27, 21). This first communication gave a pledge that the Divine instructions which, according to the provisions of the Theocracy, had been imparted to Moses, would be continued to the new leader, though God might not perhaps speak to him “mouth to mouth” (Numbers, 12, 8). **Joshua**—The original name, Oshea (Numbers, 13, 8), which had been, according to Eastern usage, changed like those of Abram and Sarai (Gen. 17, 5-15) into Jehoshua or Joshua, *i.e.*, God’s salvation, was significant of the services he was to render, and typified those of a greater Saviour (Hebrews, 4, 8). **Moses’ minister**—*i.e.*, his official attendant, who, from being constantly employed in important services, and early initiated into the principles of the government, would be well trained for undertaking the leadership of Israel. **2-9. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan**—Joshua’s mission was that of a military leader. This passage records his call to begin the work, and the address contains a literal repetition of the promise made to Moses (Deuteronomy, 11, 24, 25; 31, 6-8; 23). **3, 4. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon have I given you**—meaning, of course, not universal dominion, but only the territory comprised within the boundaries here specified (see on Deu. 19, 8, 9). **all the land of the Hittites**—These occupied the southern extremities, and were the dominant tribe, of Canaan. Their superior power, and the extent of their dominions, are attested by the mention of them under the name of Khita, on the Assyrian inscriptions, and still more frequently on the Egyptian inscriptions of the 18th and 19th Dynasties. What life and encouragement must have been imparted to Joshua by the assurance that his people who had been overwhelmed with fear of that gigantic race, were to possess “all the land of the Hittites?” **5-9. There shall not any be able to stand before thee**—Canaan was theirs by a divine grant; and the renewed confirmation of that grant to Joshua when about to lead the people into it, intimated not only a certain, but an easy conquest. It is remarkable, however, that his courage and hope of victory was made to depend (see on Deu. 17, 19) on his firm and inflexible adherence to the law of God, not only that regarding the extirpation of the Canaanites, but the whole divine code. **10-18. Then Joshua com-**

**manded the officers of the people**—These were the Shoterim (see on Exodus, 5. 6; Deuteronomy, 20. 5). **command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals**—not manna, which, though it still fell, would not keep; but corn, sheep, and articles of food procurable in the conquered countries. **for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan**—(*i.e.*, the third day according to *Heb.* idiom)—the time allotted for getting ready ere the encampment in Abel-Shittim broke up, and they removed to the desert bank of the river where no victuals could be got. At the same time Joshua himself convened the 2½ tribes which had settled East of Jordan, to remind them of their engagement (Num. 32. 1-42); to assist their brethren in the conquest of Western Canaan. Their readiness to redeem their pledge, and the terms in which they answered the appeal of Joshua, displayed to great advantage their patriotic and pious feelings at so interesting a crisis. **ye shall pass "armed"**—*i.e.*, officered or marshalled under five leaders in the old and approved caravan order (see on Exodus, 13. 18) **all the mighty men of valor**—The words are not to be interpreted strictly as meaning the whole, but only the flower or choice of the fighting men (see on ch. 4. 12, 13).

## CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1-7. RAHAB RECEIVES AND CONCEALS THE TWO SPIES. **I. Joshua sent two men to spy secretly**—Faith is manifested by an active persevering use of means (James, 2. 22); and accordingly Joshua, while confiding in the accomplishment of the Divine promise (ch. 1. 3), adopted every precaution which a skilful general could think of to render his first attempt in the invasion of Canaan successful. Two spies were despatched to reconnoitre the country, particularly in the neighborhood of Jericho; for in the prospect of investing that place, it was desirable to obtain full information as to its site, its approaches, the character and resources of its inhabitants. This mission required the strictest privacy, and it seems to have been studiously concealed from the knowledge of the Israelites themselves, lest any unfavorable or exaggerated report, publicly circulated, might have dispirited the people, as that of the spies did in the days of Moses. **Jericho**—Some derive this name from a word signifying "*new moon*," in reference to the crescent-like plain in which it stood, formed by an amphitheatre of hills; others from a word signifying "*its scent*," on account of the fragrance of the balsam and palm trees in which it was enbosomed. Its site was long supposed to be represented by the small mud-walled hamlet Er-Riha; but recent researches have fixed on a spot about half-an-hour's journey westward, where large ruins exist, and about six or eight miles distant from the Jordan. It was for that age a strongly-fortified town, the key of the Eastern pass through the deep ravine, now called Wady-Kelt, into the interior of Palestine. **they came into an harlot's house**—Many expositors, desirous of removing the stigma of this name from an ancestress of the Saviour (Matthew, 1. 5), have called her a hostess or tavern-keeper. But scriptural usage (Leviticus, 21. 7-14; Deuteronomy, 23. 18; Judges, 11. 1; 1 Kings, 3. 16), the authority of the Septuagint, followed by the apostles (Hebrews, 11. 31; James, 2. 25), and the immemorial style of Eastern Khans, which are never kept by women, establish the propriety of the



term employed in our version. Her house was probably recommended to the spies by the convenience of its situation, without any knowledge of the character of the inmates. But a divine influence directed them in the choice of that lodging-place. **2, 3. It was told to the king**—By the sentinels who at such a time of threatened invasion would be posted on the Eastern frontier, and whose duty required them to make a strict report to headquarters of the arrival of all strangers. **4-6. The woman took the two men and hid them**—*lit.*, him, *i.e.*, each of them in separate places, of course previous to the appearance of the royal messengers, and in anticipation of a speedy search after her guests. According to Eastern manners, which pay an almost superstitious respect to a woman's apartment, the royal messengers did not demand admittance to search, but asked her to bring the foreigners out. **6. she had brought them to the top of the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax**—Flax, with other vegetable productions, is at a certain season spread out in the flat roofs of Eastern houses to be dried in the sun; and after lying awhile, it is piled up in numerous little stacks, which, from the luxuriant growth of the flax, rise to a height of three or four feet. Behind some of these stacks Rahab concealed the spies. **the time of shutting the gates**—the gates of all Oriental cities are closed at sunset, after which there is no possibility either of admission or egress. **the men went out**—This was a palpable deception. But, as lying is a common vice among heathen people, Rahab was probably unconscious of its moral guilt, especially as she resorted to it as a means for screening her guests; and she might deem herself bound to do it by the laws of Eastern hospitality, which make it a point of honor to preserve the greatest enemy, if he has once eaten one's salt. Judged by the divine law, her answer was a sinful expedient; but her infirmity being united with faith, she was graciously pardoned and her service accepted (James, 2. 25). **7. The men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords**—That river is crossed at several well known fords. The first and second immediately below the sea of Galilee; the third and fourth immediately above and below the pilgrim's bathing place, opposite Jericho. **as soon as they which pursued after them were gone they shut the gate**—This precaution was to ensure the capture of the spies, should they have been lurking in the city.

**8-21. THE COVENANT BETWEEN HER AND THEM. 8-13. She came up unto them to the roof and said**—Rahab's dialogue is full of interest, as showing the universal panic and consternation of the Canaanites on the one hand (ch. 24. 11; Deuteronomy, 2. 25), and her strong convictions on the other, founded on a knowledge of the divine promise; and the stupendous miracles that had opened the way of the Israelites to the confines of the promised land. She was convinced of the supremacy of Jehovah, and her earnest stipulations for the preservation of her relatives amidst the perils of the approaching invasion, attest the sincerity and strength of her faith. **14. The men answered, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business**—This was a solemn pledge—a virtual oath, though the name of God is not mentioned; and the words "if ye utter not this our business," were added, not as a condition of their fidelity, but as necessary for her safety, which might be endangered if the private agreement was divulged. **15. Her house was on the wall**—In many Oriental cities houses are built on the walls, with overhanging

windows; in others the town wall forms the back wall of the house, so that the window opens into the country. Rahab's was probably of this latter description, and the cord or rope sufficiently strong to bear the weight of a man. **16-21. She said**—rather “she had said,” for what follows must have been part of the previous conversation. **get you to the mountain**—A range of white limestone hills extends on the north, called Quarantania (now Jebel-Karantul), rising to a height of from 1200 to 1500 feet, and the sides of which are perforated with caves. Some one peak adjoining, was familiarly known to the inhabitants as “the mountain. The prudence and propriety of the advice to flee in that direction rather than to the ford, were made apparent by the sequel. **21. She bound the scarlet line in the window**—Probably soon after the departure of the spies. It was not formed, as some suppose, into network, as a lattice, but simply to hang down the wall. Its red color made it conspicuous, and it was thus a sign and pledge of safety to Rahab's house, as the bloody mark on the lintels of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt to that people.

## CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1-6. JOSHUA COMES TO JORDAN. **1. Joshua rose early in the morning**—*i.e.*, on the day following that on which the spies had returned with their encouraging report, the camp was broken up in “Shittim,” (the acacia groves) and removed to the eastern bank of the Jordan. The duration of their stay is indicated (*v.* 2), being, according to *Heb.* reckoning, only one entire day, including the evening of arrival and the morning of the passage; and such a time would be absolutely necessary for so motley an assemblage of men, women, and children, with all their gear and cattle, to make ready for going into an enemy's country. **2-4. the officers went through the host, and commanded the people**—The instructions given at this time and in this place were different from those described (ch. I. 11). **when ye see the ark, and the priests the Levites bearing it, etc.**—The usual position of the ark, when at rest, was in the centre of the camp; and, during a march, in the middle of the procession. On this occasion it was to occupy the van, and be borne not by the Kohathite Levites, but the priests, as on all solemn and extraordinary occasions (*cf.* Numbers, 4. 15; ch. 6. 6; 1 Kings, 8. 3-6). **then ye shall go after it, yet there shall be a space between it and you**—These instructions refer exclusively to the advance into the river. The distance which the people were to keep in the rear of the ark was nearly a mile; had they crowded too near the ark, the view would have been intercepted, and this intervening space, therefore, was ordered, that the chest containing the sacred symbols might be distinctly visible to all parts of the camp, and be recognized as their guide in the untrdden way. **5. Joshua said unto the people**—rather “had said,” for as he speaks of “to-morrow,” the address must have been made previous to the day of crossing, and the sanctification was in all probability the same as Moses had commanded before the giving of the law, consisting of an outward cleansing (Exodus, 19. 10-15,) preparatory to that serious and devout state of mind with which so great a manifestation should be witnessed. **6. Joshua spake unto the priests**—This order to the priests

would be given privately, and involving as it did an important change in the established order of march, it must be considered as announced in the name and by the authority of God. Moreover, as soon as the priests stepped into the waters of Jordan they were to stand still. The ark was to accomplish what had been done by the rod of Moses.

7, 8. THE LORD ENCOURAGETH JOSHUA. 7, 8. **The Lord said to Joshua, This day will I magnify thee in the sight of all Israel**—Joshua had already received distinguished honors (Exodus, 24. 13; Deuteronomy, 31. 7). But a higher token of the divine favor was now to be publicly bestowed on him, and evidence given in the same unmistakable manner, that his mission and authority were from God as was of Moses (Ex. 14. 31).

9-13. JOSHUA ENCOURAGETH THE PEOPLE. 9-13. **Come hither and hear the words of the Lord**—It seems that the Israelites had no intimation how they were to cross the river till shortly before the event. The premonitory address of Joshua, taken in connection with the miraculous result exactly as he had described it, would tend to increase and confirm their faith in the God of their fathers as not a dull, senseless, inanimate thing like the idols of the nations, but a Being of life, power, and activity to defend them and work for them.

14-17. THE WATERS OF JORDAN ARE DIVIDED. 14. **And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, etc.**—To understand the scene described we must imagine the band of priests with the ark on their shoulders, standing on the depressed edge of the river, while the mass of the people were at a mile's distance. Suddenly the whole bed of the river was dried up; a spectacle the more extraordinary that it took place in the time of harvest, corresponding to our April or May,—when "the Jordan overfloweth all its banks." The original words may be more properly rendered "fills all its banks," its channel, snow-fed from Lebanon, is at its greatest height—brim-full: a translation which gives the only true description of the state of Jordan in harvest as observed by modern travellers. The river about Jericho is, in ordinary appearance, about 50 or 60 yards in breadth. But as seen in harvest, it is twice as broad; and in ancient times, when the hills on the right and left were much more drenched with rain and snow than since the forests have disappeared, the river must, from a greater accession of water, have been broader still than at harvest time in the present day. 16. **the waters which came down from above**—*i.e.*, the Sea of Galilee "stood and rose up in a heap," a firm, compact barrier (Exodus, 15. 8; Psalm, 78. 13), "very far," high up the stream; "from the city of Adam, that is beside Zaretan," near mount Sartabeh, in the northern part of the Ghor (1 Kings, 7. 46); *i.e.*, a distance of thirty miles from the Israelitish encampment; and "those that came down towards the sea of the desert"—the Dead Sea—failed and were cut off (Psalm 114. 2, 3). The river was thus dried up as far as the eye could reach. This was a stupendous miracle; Jordan takes its name, "the Descender," from the force of the current, which, after passing the Sea of Galilee, becomes greatly increased as it plunges through twenty-seven "horrible rapids and cascades," besides a great many lesser, through a fall of 1000 feet, averaging from four to five miles an hour. [LYNCH.] When swollen "in time of harvest," it flows with a vastly accelerated current. 17. **the priests and all the Israelites passed on dry ground**—the river about

Jericho has a firm pebbly bottom on which the host might pass without inconvenience when the water was cleared off. **the people passed over right against Jericho**—The exact spot is unknown; but it cannot be that fixed by Greek tradition—the pilgrims' bathing-place—both because it is too much to the north, and the Eastern banks are there sheer precipices of 10 or 15 feet high.

## CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1-8. **TWELVE STONES TAKEN FOR A MEMORIAL OUT OF JORDAN.** **1, 2. The Lord spake unto Joshua, Take you twelve men**—each representing a tribe; they had been previously chosen for this service (ch. 3. 12), and the repetition of the command is made here solely to introduce the account of its execution. Though Joshua had been divinely instructed to erect a commemorative pile, the representatives were not apprised of the work they were to do till the time of the passage. **4, 5. Joshua called the twelve men**—They had probably, from a feeling of reverence, kept back, and were standing on the eastern bank. They were now ordered to advance, and picking up each a stone, probably as large as he could carry, from around the spot "where the priests stood," pass over before the ark, and deposit the stones in the place of next encampment (*vs.* 19, 20), viz., Gilgal. **6, 7. that this may be a sign among you**—The erection of cairns, or huge piles of stones, as monuments of remarkable incidents, has been common amongst all people, especially in the early and rude periods of their history. They are the established means of perpetuating the memory of important transactions, especially among the nomadic people of the East; and although there be no inscription engraven on them, the history and object of such simple monuments are traditionally preserved from age to age. Similar was the purpose contemplated by the conveyance of the twelve stones to Gilgal; it was that they might be a standing record to posterity of the miraculous passage of the Jordan. **8. the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded**—that is, it was done by their twelve representatives.

**9. TWELVE STONES SET UP IN THE MIDST OF JORDAN.** **9. Joshua set up twelve stones in the place where the feet of the priests stood**—In addition to the memorial just described, there was another memento of the miraculous event, a duplicate of the former, set up in the river itself, on the very spot where the ark had rested. This heap of stones might have been a large and compactly-built one, and visible in the ordinary state of the river. As nothing is said whence these stones were got, some have imagined that they might have been gathered in the adjoining fields, and deposited by the people as they passed the appointed spot. **they are there unto this day**—at least 20 years after the event, if we reckon by the date of this history (ch. 24. 26), and much later, if the words in the latter clause were inserted by Samuel or Ezra.

Ver. 10-13. **THE PEOPLE PASS OVER.** **10. the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan**—This position was well calculated to animate the people, who probably crossed *below* the ark, as well

as to facilitate Joshua's execution of the minutest instructions respecting the passage (Numbers, 27, 21-23). The unfaltering confidence of the priests contrasts strikingly with the conduct of the people, who "hasted and passed over." Their faith, like that of many of God's people, was, through the weakness of nature, blended with fears. But perhaps their "haste" may be viewed in a more favorable light, as indicating the alacrity of their obedience, or it might have been enjoined, in order that the whole multitude might pass in one day. **11. the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests in the presence of the people**—The ark is mentioned as the efficient cause; it had been the first to move—it was the last to leave; and its movements arrested the deep attention of the people, who probably stood on the opposite bank, wrapt in admiration and awe of this closing scene. It was a great miracle, greater even than the passage of the Red Sea in this respect: that, admitting the fact, there is no possibility of rationalistic insinuations as to the influence of natural causes in producing it, as have been made in the former case. **12, 13. The children of Reuben... passed over armed before the children of Israel**—There is no precedency to the other tribes indicated here; for there is no reason to suppose that the usual order of march was departed from; but these are honorably mentioned to show that, in pursuance of their engagement (ch. I. 16-18), they had sent a complement of fighting men to accompany their brethren in the war of invasion. **into the plains of Jericho**—That part of the Araba or Ghor, on the west, is about seven miles broad from the Jordan to the mountain entrance at Wady-Kelt. Though now desert, this valley was in ancient times thickly covered with wood—an immense palm forest, seven miles long, surrounded Jericho.

**14-24. GOD MAGNIFIES JOSHUA. 14, 17. On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel**—It appeared clear, from the chief part he acted, that he was the divinely appointed leader; for even the priests did not enter the river, or quit their position, except at his command; and thenceforward his authority was as firmly established as that of his predecessor. **18. It came to pass when the priests that bare the ark were come out of the midst of Jordan... that the waters of the Jordan returned unto their place**—Their crossing, which was the final act, completed the evidence of the miracle; for then, and not till then, the suspended laws of nature were restored, the waters returned to their place, and the river flowed with as full a current as before. **18. The people came out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month**—*i.e.*, the month of Nisan, four days before the Passover, and the very day when the Paschal Lamb required to be set apart, the providence of God having arranged that the entrance into the promised land should be at the Feast. **and encamped in Gilgal**—the name is here given by anticipation (see on ch. 5. 9). It was a tract of land, according to Josephus, fifty stadia ( $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles) from Jordan, and ten stadia ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles) from Jericho, at the eastern outskirts of the palm forest, now supposed to be the spot occupied by the village Riha. **20-24. Those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan did Joshua pitch in Gilgal**—probably to render them more conspicuous, they might be raised on a foundation of earth or turf; and the pile was designed to serve a double purpose—that of impressing the heathen with a sense of the omnipotence of God, while at the same time it would teach an important lesson in religion to the young and rising Israelites in after ages.

## CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1. **THE CANAANITES AFRAID.** 1. **the Kings of the Amorites which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites by the sea**—Under the former designation were included the people who inhabited the mountainous region, and under the latter those who were on the sea-coast of Palestine. **heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan. . . that their heart melted**—They had probably reckoned on the swollen river interposing for a time a sure barrier of defence. But seeing it had been completely dried up, they were completely paralysed by so incontestible a proof that God was on the side of the invaders. In fact, the contest had already begun in the total prostration of spirit among the native chiefs. "Their heart melted," but unhappily not into faith and penitent submission.

2-12. **CIRCUMCISION IS RENEWED.** 2. **At that time**—on the encampment being made after the passage. **the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives**—Stone knives, collect and make them ready. Flints have been used in the early times of all people; and although the use of iron was known to the Hebrews in the days of Joshua, probably the want of a sufficient number of metallic implements dictated the employment of flints on this occasion (cf. Exodus, 4. 25). **circumcise again the children of Israel a second time**—*lit.*, return and circumcise. The command did not require him to repeat the operation on those who had undergone it, but to resume the observance of the rite, which had been long discontinued. The language, however, evidently points to a general circumcising on some previous occasion, which, though unrecorded, must have been made before the celebration of the Passover at Sinai (cf. Exodus, 12. 48; Numbers, 9. 5), as a mixed multitude accompanied the camp. "The second time" of general circumcising was at the entrance into Canaan. 3. **at the hill**—Probably one of the argillaceous hills that form the highest terrace of the Jordan, or a rising ground at the palm forest. 4-7. **this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise**—The omission to circumcise the children born in the wilderness might have been owing to the incessant movements of the people; but it is most generally thought that the true cause was a temporary suspension of the covenant with the unbelieving race who, being rejected of the Lord, were doomed to perish in the wilderness, and whose children had to bear the iniquity of their fathers (Numbers, 14. 33), though as the latter were to be brought into the promised land, the covenant would be renewed with them. 8. **when they had done circumcising all the people**—As the number of those born in the wilderness and uncircumcised must have been immense, a difficulty is apt to be felt how the rite could have been performed on such a multitude in so short a time. But it has been calculated that the proportion between those already circumcised (under twenty when the doom was pronounced), and those to be circumcised, was one to four, and consequently the whole ceremony could easily have been performed in a day. Circumcision being the sign and seal of the covenant, its performance was virtually an infirmament in the promised land, and its being delayed till their actual entrance into the country, was a wise and gracious act on the part of God, who postponed this trying duty till the hearts of the people, animated by the recent astonishing miracle, were prepared to obey the Divine will. **they abode**

**in their places till they were whole**—It is calculated that of those who did not need to be circumcised, more than 50,000 were left to defend the camp, if an attack had been then made upon it. 9. **The Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt**—The taunts industriously cast by that people upon Israel as *nationally* rejected by God by the cessation of circumcision, and the renewal of that rite was a practical announcement of the restoration of the covenant, [KEIL.] **Gilgal**—No trace either of the name or site is now to be found; but it was about two miles from Jericho [JOSEPHUS], and well-suited for an encampment, by the advantages of shade and water. It was the first place pronounced “holy” in the Holy Land (v. 15). 10. **kept the passover on the fourteenth day at even**—The time fixed by the law (see Exodus, 12. 18; Leviticus, 23. 5; Numbers, 28. 16). Thus the national existence was commenced by a solemn act of religious dedication. 11, 12. **they did eat of the old corn of the land**—Found in store-houses of the inhabitants who had fled into Jericho.  **parched corn**—New grain (see on Lev. 23. 10), probably lying in the fields. **Roasted**—a simple and primitive preparation, much liked in the East. This abundance of food led to the discontinuance of the manna; and the fact of its then ceasing, viewed in connection with its seasonable appearance in the barren wilderness, is a striking proof of its miraculous origin.

13-15. AN ANGEL APPEARS TO JOSHUA. 13. **When Joshua was by Jericho**—in the immediate vicinity of that city, probably engaged in surveying the fortifications, and in meditating the best plan of a siege. **there stood a man over against him with a sword drawn**—It is evident from the strain of the context that this was not a mere vision, but an actual appearance; the suddenness of which surprised, but did not daunt, the intrepid leader. 14. **the host of the Lord**—either the Israelitish people (Exodus, 7. 4; 12. 41; Isaiah, 55. 4), or the angels (Psalm, 148. 2), or both included, and the Captain of it was the angel of the covenant, whose visible manifestations were varied according to the occasion. His attitude of equipment betokened his approval of, and interest in, the war of invasion. **Joshua fell on his face and did worship**—The adoption by Joshua of this absolute form of prostration, demonstrates the sentiments of profound reverence with which the language and majestic bearing of the stranger inspired him. The real character of this personage was disclosed by His accepting the homage of worship (cf. Acts, 10. 25, 26; Revelation, 19. 10), and still further in the command, “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot.” (Exodus, 3. 5.)

## CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1-7. JERICO SHUT UP. 1. **Now Jericho was straitly shut up**—This verse is a parenthesis introduced to prepare the way for the directions given by the Captain of the Lord’s host. **See, I have given into thine hand Jericho**—the language intimates that a purpose already formed was about to be carried into immediate execution: and that, although the king and inhabitants of Jericho were fierce and experienced warriors who would make a stout and determined resistance, the Lord promised a certain and easy victory over them. 3-5. **Ye shall compass**

**the city, all ye men of war . . . thus shalt thou do six days, etc.**—Directions are here given as to the mode of procedure. *Heb.*, “horns of jubilee;” *i.e.*, the bent or crooked trumpets with which the jubilee was proclaimed. It is probable that the horns of this animal were used first, and that afterwards, when metallic trumpets were introduced, the primitive name, as well as form of them, was traditionally continued. The design of this whole proceeding was obviously to impress the Canaanites with a sense of Divine Omnipotence—to teach the Israelites a memorable lesson of faith and confidence in God’s promises, and to inspire sentiments of respect and reverence for the ark as the symbol of His presence. The length of time during which those circuits were made tended the more intensely to arrest the attention, and to deepen the impressions, both of the Israelites and the enemy. The number seven was among the Israelites the symbolic seal of the covenant between God and their nation. [KEIL, HENGSTENBERG.] 6, 7. **Joshua called the priests**—The pious leader, whatever military preparations he had made, surrendered all his own views at once and unreservedly, to the declared will of God.

8-19. **THE CITY COMPASSED SIX DAYS.** 8-11. **the seven priests blowing the seven trumpets passed on before the Lord**—before the ark, called “the ark of the covenant,” for it contained the tables on which the covenant was inscribed. The procession was made in deep and solemn silence, conformably to the instructions given to the people by their leader at the outset, that they were to refrain from all acclamation and noise of any kind, until he should give them a signal. It must have been a strange sight: no mount was raised, no sword drawn, no engine planted, no pioneers undermining—here were armed men, but no stroke given; they must walk and not fight. Doubtless the people of Jericho made themselves merry with the spectacle. [BISHOP HALL.] 12-14. **Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord**—The second day’s procession seems to have taken place in the morning. In all other respects down, even to the smallest details, the arrangements of the first day continued to be the rule followed on the other six. 15. **On the seventh day they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city seven times**—On account of the seven circuits they had to make that day. It is evident, however, that the militia only of the Israelites had been called to the march—for it is inconceivable that two millions of people could have gone so frequently round the city in a day. 16. **it came to pass at the seventh time, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city**—This delay brought out their faith and obedience in so remarkable a manner, that it is celebrated by the apostle (Hebrews, II. 30). 17-19. **the city shall be accursed**—(See on Leviticus, 27. 28, 29). The *cherem* or anathema, was a devotion to utter destruction (Deuteronomy, 7. 2; 20. 17; I Samuel, 15. 3). When such a ban was pronounced against a hostile city, the men and animals were killed—no booty was allowed to be taken; the idols and all the precious ornaments on them were to be burned (Deuteronomy, 7. 25; cf. I Chronicles, 14. 12); everything was either to be destroyed or consecrated to the sanctuary. Joshua pronounced this ban on Jericho, a great and wealthy city, evidently by Divine direction, and the severity of the doom accordant with the requirements of a law which was holy, just and good,



and justified not only by the fact of its inhabitants being part of a race who had filled up their iniquities, but by their resisting the light of the recent astonishing miracle at the Jordan. Besides, as Jericho seems to have been defended by reinforcements from all the country (ch. 24. 11), its destruction would paralyze all the rest of the devoted people, and thus tend to facilitate the conquest of the land; showing, as so astounding a military miracle did, that it was done, not by man, but by the power, and through the anger of God. 18. **and ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing**—Generally they were left at liberty to take the spoil of other cities that were captured (Deuteronomy, 2. 35; 3. 7; ch. 8. 27). But this, as the first fruits of Canaan, was made an exception; nothing was to be spared but Rahab and those in her house. A violation of these stringent orders would not only render the guilty persons obnoxious to the curse, but entail distress and adversity upon all Israel, by provoking the divine displeasure. These were the instructions given, or repeated (Deu. 13. 17; 7. 26), previously to the last act of the siege.

20, 21. **THE WALLS FALL DOWN.** 20. **So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets**—Towards the close of the seventh circuit, the signal was given by Joshua, and on the Israelites raising their loud war-cry, the walls fell down, doubtless burying multitudes of the inhabitants in the ruins, while the besiegers, rushing in, consigned everything animate and inanimate to indiscriminate destruction (Deuteronomy, 20. 16, 17). Jewish writers mention it as an immemorial tradition, that the city fell on the Sabbath. It should be remembered that the Canaanites were incorrigible idolators, addicted to the most horrible vices, and that the righteous judgment of God might sweep them away by the sword, as well as by famine or pestilence. There was mercy mingled with judgment in employing the sword as the instrument of punishing the guilty Canaanites, for while it was directed against one place, time was afforded for others to repent.

22-25. **RAHAB IS SAVED.** 22, 23. **Joshua said, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out the woman, and all that she hath**—it is evident that the town walls were not demolished universally, at least all at once, for Rahab's house was allowed to stand until her relatives were rescued according to promise. **they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel**—a temporary exclusion, in order that they might be cleansed from the defilement of their native idolatries, and gradually trained for admission into the society of God's people. 24. **Burned the city and all therein**—except the silver, gold and other metals, which, as they would not burn, were added to the treasury of the sanctuary. 25. **Rahab dwelleth in Israel unto this day**—a proof that this book was written not long after the events related.

26, 27. **THE REBUILDER OF JERICHO CURSED.** 26. **Joshua adjured them at that time**—*i.e.*, imposed upon his countrymen a solemn oath, binding on themselves as well as their posterity, that they would never rebuild that city. Its destruction was designed by God to be a permanent memorial of His abhorrence of idolatry, and its attendant vices. **Cursed be the man that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho**—*i.e.*, makes the daring attempt to build. **he shall lay the foundation in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set**

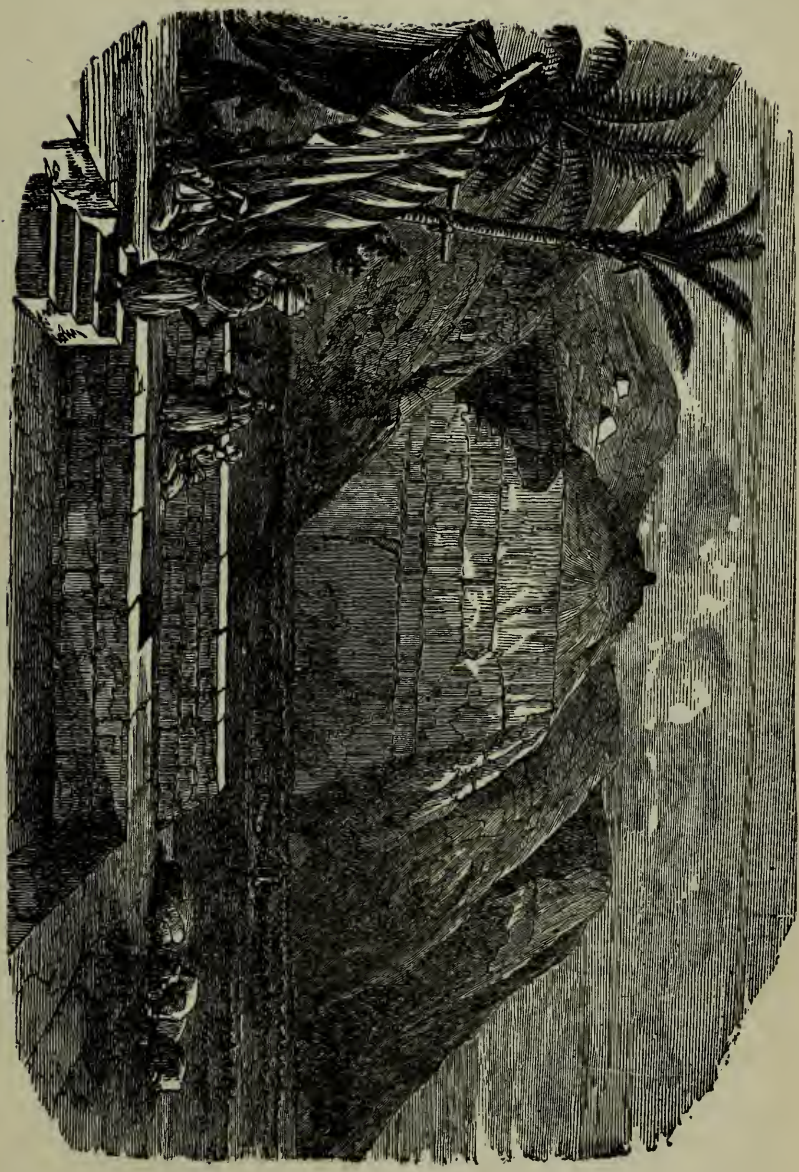
**up the gates of it**—shall become childless—the first beginning being marked by the death of his eldest son, and his only surviving child dying at the time of its completion. This curse was accomplished 550 years after its denunciation (see on 1 Kings, 16. 34).

## CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1. **ACHAN'S TRESPASS. 1. The children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing**—There was one transgressor against the *cherem*, or ban, on Jericho, and his transgression brought the guilt and disgrace of sin upon the whole nation. **Achan**—called afterwards Achar (trouble) (1 Chronicles, 2. 7). **Zabdi**, or Zimri (1 Chronicles, 2. 6). **Zerah**, or Zarah, son of Judah and Tamar (Genesis, 38. 30). His genealogy is given probably to show that from a parentage so infamous, the descendants would not be carefully trained in the fear of God.

2-26. **THE ISRAELITES SMITTEN AT AI. 2. Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai**—after the sacking of Jericho, the next step was to penetrate into the hills above. Accordingly spies went up the mountain pass to view the country. The precise site of Ai or Hai, is indicated with sufficient clearness (Genesis, 12. 8; 13. 3), and has been recently discovered in an isolated Tell, called by the natives Tell-el-hajar, “the Mount of Stones,” at two miles, or thirty-five minutes’ distance, east-south-east from Bethel. [VAN DE VELDE.] **Bethaven**—(“house of vanity,”) a name afterwards given derisively (Hosea, 4. 15; 5. 8; 10. 5;) on account of its idolatries to Bethel, “house of God.” But here referred to another place, about six miles east of Bethel, and three north of Ai. 3. **Let not all the people go up, for they are but few**—As the population of Ai amounted to 1200, (ch. 8. 25,) it was a considerable town; though in the hasty and distant reconnoitre made by the spies, it probably appeared small in comparison of Jericho, and this may have been the reason of their proposing so small a detachment to capture it. 4, 5. **They fled before the men of Ai**—An unexpected resistance, and the loss of thirty-six of their number, diffused a panic, which ended in an ignominious rout, **Chased them from before the gate, even unto Shebarim**—*i.e.*, unto the “breakings” or “fissures” at the opening of the passes. **and smote them in the going down**—*i.e.*, the declivity or slope of the deep rugged adjoining wady. **wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water**—It is evident that the troops engaged were a tumultuary, undisciplined band, no better skilled in military affairs than the Bedouin Arabs, who become disheartened and flee on the loss of ten or fifteen men. But the consternation of the Israelites arose from another cause—the evident displeasure of God who withheld that aid on which they had confidently reckoned. 6-9. **Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth before the ark, he and the elders**—It is evident, from those tokens of humiliation and sorrow, that a solemn fast was observed on this occasion. The language of Joshua’s prayer is thought by many to savor of human infirmity, and to be wanting in that reverence and submission he owed to God. But, although apparently breathing a spirit of bold remonstrance and complaint, it was in reality the effusion of a deeply humbled and afflicted mind, expressing his belief that God could not, after having so miraculously brought His people

Jericho





over Jordan into the promised land, intend to destroy them, to expose them to the insults of their triumphant enemies, and bring reproach upon His own name for inconstancy or unkindness to His people, or inability to resist their enemies. Unable to understand the cause of the present calamity, he owned the hand of God. 10, 15. **the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up**—The answer of the Divine oracle was to this effect:—the crisis is owing not to unfaithfulness in Me, but sin in the people. The conditions of the covenant have been violated by the reservation of spoil from the doomed city, wickedness, emphatically called folly, has been committed in Israel, (Ps. 14. 1,) and dissimulation, with other aggravations of the crime, continues to be practiced. The people are liable to destruction equally with the accursed nations of Canaan (Deuteronomy, 7. 26). Means must, without delay, be taken to discover and punish the perpetrator of this trespass, that Israel may be released from the ban, and things be restored to their former state of prosperity. 16-18. **So Joshua rose early, and brought Israel by tribes**—*i.e.*, before the tabernacle. The lot being appealed to (Proverbs, 16. 33), he proceeded in the enquiry from heads of tribes to heads of families, and from heads of households in succession to one family and to particular persons in that family, until the criminal was found to be Achan, who, on Joshua's admonition, confessed the fact of having secreted for his own use, in the floor of his tent, spoil both in garments and money. How dreadful must have been his feelings when he saw the slow but certain process of discovery (Numbers, 32. 23). 19. **Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give glory to God**—a form of adjuration to tell the truth—21. **A goodly Babylonish garment**—*lit.*, a mantle of Shinar. The plain of Shinar was in early times celebrated for its gorgeous robes, which were of brilliant and various colors, generally arranged in figured patterns, probably resembling those of modern Turkey carpets, and the colors were either interwoven in the loom or embroidered with the needle. **two hundred shekels of silver**—equivalent to £22 10s. sterling, according to the old Mosaic shekel, or the half of that sum, reckoning by the common shekel. **A wedge of gold**—*lit.*, an ingot or bar in the shape of a *tongue*. 22, 23. **Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent**—from impatient eagerness not only to test the truth of the story, but to clear Israel from the imputation of guilt. Having discovered the stolen articles, they laid them out before the Lord, "as a token of their belonging to Him" on account of the ban. 24-26 **Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan**—himself with his children and all his property, cattle as well as moveables, were brought into one of the long, broad ravines that open into the Ghor, and after being stoned to death (Numbers, 15. 30-35), his corpse, with all belonging to him, was consumed to ashes by fire. "All Israel" were present, not only as spectators, but active agents, as many as possible, in inflicting the punishment—thus testifying their abhorrence of the sacrilege, and their intense solicitude to regain the Divine favor. As the divine law expressly forbade the children to be put to death for their fathers' sins (Deuteronomy 24. 16), the conveyance of Achan's "sons and daughters" to the place of execution might be only as spectators, that they might take warning by the parental fate; or, if they shared his punishment (ch. 22. 20), they had probably been accomplices in his crime, and, indeed, he could scarcely have dug a hole within his tent, without his family being privy

to it. **They raised over him a great heap of stones**—It is customary to raise *cairns* over the graves of criminals or infamous persons in the East still. **The name of that place was called, The valley of Achor (trouble) unto this day**—So painful an episode would give notoriety to the spot, and it is more than once noticed by the sacred writers of a later age (Isaiah, 65. 10; Hosea, 2. 15).

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1-28. GOD ENCOURAGETH JOSHUA. **1. The Lord said unto Joshua, Fear not**—By the execution of justice on Achan, the Divine wrath was averted, the Israelites were re-assured, defeat was succeeded by victory; and thus the case of Ai affords a striking example of God's disciplinary government, in which chastisements for sin are often made, to pave the way for a bestowment of those temporal benefits, which, on account of sin, have been withdrawn, or withheld for a time. Joshua, who had been greatly dispirited, was encouraged by a special communication promising him (see ch. 1. 6; Deu. 31. 6-8) success in the next attempt, which, however, was to be conducted on different principles. **take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai**—The number of fighting men amounted to 600,000, and the whole force was ordered on this occasion, partly because the spies, in their self-confidence, had said that a few were sufficient to attack the place (ch. 7. 3), partly to dispel any misgivings which the memory of the late disaster might have created, and partly that the circumstance of the first spoil obtained in Canaan being shared amongst all, might operate both as a reward for obedience in refraining from the booty of Jericho, and as an incentive to future exertions (Deuteronomy, 6. 10). The rest of the people, including the women and children, remained in the camp at Gilgal. Being in the plains of Jericho, it was an ascent to Ai, which was on a hill. **I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land... lay an ambush for the city**—God assured him of its capture, but allowed him to follow his own tactics in obtaining the possession. **So Joshua... chose out thirty thousand men of valor**—Joshua despatched 30,000 men under covert of night, to station themselves at the place appointed for the ambuscade. Out of this number a detachment of 5000 were sent forward to conceal themselves in the immediate precincts of the town, in order to seize the first opportunity of throwing themselves into it. **4. behind the city**—is rendered (*v.* 9), "on the west of Ai." **between Beth-el and Ai**—Beth-el, though lying quite near, in the direction of west by north, cannot be seen from Tell-el-hajar; two rocky heights rise between both places, in the wady El-Murogede, just as the laying of an ambush to the west of Ai would require. [VAN DE VELDE, ROBINSON.] **10. Joshua numbered the people**—*i.e.*, the detachment of liers-in-wait; he did this, to be furnished with clear evidence afterwards, that the work had been done without any loss of men, whereby the people's confidence in God would be strengthened, and encouragement given them to prosecute the war of invasion with vigor. **he and the elders of Israel**—the chief magistrates and rulers, whose presence and official authority were necessary to ensure that the cattle and spoils of the city might be equally divided betwixt

the combatants and the rest of the people (Numbers, 31. 27)—a military rule in Israel, that would have been very liable to be infringed, if an excited soldiery, eager for booty, had been left to their own will. **11-14. There was a valley**—(*lit.*, the valley) **between them and Ai. Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley**—The deep and steep-sided glen to the north of Tell-el-hajar, into which one looks down from the Tell, fully agrees with this account. [VAN DE VELDE.] Joshua himself took up his position on the north side of “the ravine”—the deep chasm of the wady El-Murogede, “that night”—means, while it was dark, probably after midnight, or very early in the morning (John, 20. 1). The king of Ai, in the early dawn, rouses his slumbering subjects, and makes a hasty sally with all his people who were capable of bearing arms, once more to surprise and annihilate them. **at a time appointed**—either an hour concocted between the king and people of Ai, and those of Beth-el, who were confederates in this enterprise, or perhaps they had fixed on the same time of day, as they had fought successfully against Israel on the former occasion, deeming it a lucky hour—Judges, 20. 38). **but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city.** It is evident that this king and his subjects were little experienced in war, otherwise they would have sent out scouts to reconnoitre the neighborhood; at all events, would not have left their town wholly unprotected and open. Perhaps an ambuscade may have been a war stratagem hitherto unknown in that country, and amongst that people. **15-17. Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them**—the pretended flight in the direction of the wilderness—*i.e.*, south-east, into the Ghor, the desert valley of the Jordan, decoyed all the inhabitants of Ai out of the city, while the people of Beth-el hastened to participate in the expected victory. It is supposed by some, from “the ci y,” and not “cities,” being spoken of, that the effective force of Beth-el had been concentrated in Ai, as the two places were closely contiguous, and Ai the larger of the two. (See on ch. 12. 16.) It may be remarked, however, that the words, “or Beth-el,” are not in the Sept., and are rejected by some eminent scholars, as an interpolation not found in the most ancient MSS. **18-25. Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city**—the uplifted spear had probably a flag, or streamer on it, to render it the more conspicuous from the height where he stood. At the sight of this understood signal, the ambush nearest the city, informed by their scouts, made a sudden rush, and took possession of the city, telegraphing to their brethren, by raising a smoke from the walls. Upon seeing this, the main body, who had been feigning a flight, turned round at the head of the pass upon their pursuers, while the 25,000 issuing from their ambuscade, fell upon their rear. The Aites surprised, looked back, and found their situation now desperate. **23. The king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua**—to be reserved for a more ignominious death, as a greater criminal in God’s sight than his subjects. In the mingled attack from before and behind, the whole men of Ai were massacred. **24. all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword**—the women, children, and old persons left behind, amounting, in all, to 12,000 people. **Joshua drew not his hand back**—Perhaps, from the long continuance of the posture, it might have been a means appointed by God, to animate the people, and kept up in the same devout spirit as Moses had

shewn, in lifting up his hands, until the work of slaughter had been completed—the ban executed. (See on Exodus, 17. 11, 12.) **28. Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever**—“for ever” often signifies a long time. (Genesis, 6. 3.) One of the remarkable things, with regard to the Tell we have identified with Ai is its name; the Tell, of the heap of stones; a name which to this day remains. [VAN DE VELDE.]

**29. THE KING HANGED. 29. The king of Ai he hanged on a tree**—*i.e.*, gibbeted. In ancient, and particularly Oriental wars, the chiefs, when taken prisoners, were usually executed. The Israelites were obliged, by the divine law, to put them to death. The execution of the king of Ai would tend to facilitate the conquest of the land, by striking terror into the other chiefs, and making it appear a judicial process, in which they were inflicting the vengeance of God upon his enemies. **take his carcass down . . . and raise thereon a great heap of stones**—It was taken down at sunset, according to the Divine command (Deuteronomy, 21. 23), and cast into a pit dug “at the entering of the gate,” because that was the most public place. An immense cairn was raised over his grave—an ancient usage, still existing in the East, whereby is marked the sepulchre of persons whose memory is infamous.

**30, 31. JOSHUA BUILDS AN ALTAR. 30, 31. Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal**—(See on Deuteronomy, 27. 1, 2.) This spot was little short of twenty miles from Ai. The march through a hostile country, and the unmolested performance of the religious ceremonial observed at this mountain, would be greatly facilitated, through the blessing of God, by the disastrous fall of Ai. The solemn duty was to be attended to at the first convenient opportunity after the entrance into Canaan (Deuteronomy, 27. 2); and with this view Joshua seems to have conducted the people through the mountainous region that intervened, though no details of the journey have been recorded. Ebal was on the north, opposite to Gerizim, which was on the south side of the town Sichem. (Nablous.) **an altar of whole stones**—according to the instructions given to Moses (Exodus, 20. 25; Deuteronomy, 27. 5). **over which no man hath lifted up any iron**—*i.e.*, iron tool. The reason of this was, that every altar of the true God ought properly to have been built of earth (Exodus, 20. 24); and if it was constructed of stone, rough unhewn stones were to be employed, that it might retain both the appearance and nature of earth, since every bloody sacrifice was connected with sin and death, by which man, the creature of earth, is brought to earth again. [KEIL.] **they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings**—This had been done when the covenant was established (Exodus, 24. 5); and by the observance of these rites (Deuteronomy, 27. 6), the covenant was solemnly renewed—the people were reconciled to God by the burnt offering, whilst, by this feast accompanying the peace, or thank offering, a happy communion with God was enjoyed by all the families in Israel. **32. he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law**—(See on Deuteronomy, 27. 2-8); *i.e.*, the blessings and curses of the law. Some think that the stones which contained this inscription, were the stones of the altar; but this verse seems rather to indicate that a number of stone pillars were erected alongside of the altar, and on which, after they were plastered, this duplicate of the law was inscribed. **33. all**



Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side—One-half of Israel was ranged on Gerizim, and the other half on Ebal—along the sides and base of each. **before the priests and Levites**—in full view of them. **34. afterward he read all the words of the law**—caused the priests or Levites to read it. (Deuteronomy, 27. 14.) Persons are often said in Scripture to do that, which they only command to be done. **35. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not**—It appears that a much larger portion of the law was read on this occasion, than the brief summary inscribed on the stones; and this must have been the essence of the law as contained in Deuteronomy. (Deuteronomy, 4. 44; 6. 9; 27. 8.) It was not written on the stones, but on the plaster. The immediate design of this rehearsal was attained by the performance of the act itself; it only related to posterity, in so far as the record of the event would be handed down in the Book of Joshua, or the documents which form the ground-work of it. [HENGSTENBERG.] Thus faithfully did Joshua execute the instructions given by Moses. How awfully solemn must have been the assemblage and the occasion. The eye and the ear of the people being both addressed, it was calculated to leave an indelible impression; and with spirits elevated by their brilliant victories in the land of promise, memory would often revert to the striking scene on mounts Ebal and Gerizim, and in the vale of Sychar.

## CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1-29. THE KINGS COMBINE AGAINST ISRAEL. **1. all the kings which were on this side**—*i.e.*, the western side of Jordan—in the hills, the valleys, and all the coasts of the great sea—This threefold distinction marks out very clearly a large portion of Canaan. The first designates the hill country, which belonged afterwards to the tribes of Judah and Ephraim; the second, all the low country from Carmel to Gaza; and the third, the shores of the Mediterranean, from the Isthmus of Tyre to the plain of Joppa. As for the tribes mentioned, see on ch. 3. 10. **heard** (*thereof*) that is, of the sacking of Jericho and Ai, as well as the rapid advance of the Israelites into the interior of the country. **2. they gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel with one accord**—although divided by separate interests, and often at war with each other, a sense of common danger prompted them to suspend their mutual animosities, that by their united forces they might prevent the land from falling into the hands of foreign masters.

3-15. THE GIBEONITES OBTAIN A LEAGUE BY CRAFT. **3-15. when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard**—this town, as its name imports, was situated on a rocky eminence, about six miles north-west from Jerusalem, where the modern village of El-Jib now stands; it was the capital of the Hivites, and a large, important city (ch. 10. 2). It seems to have formed, in union with a few other towns in the neighborhood, a free independent state (*v.* 17), and to have enjoyed a republican government (*v.* 11). **they did work wilyly**—they acted with dexterous policy, seeking the means of self-preservation, not by force, which, they were convinced, would be unavailing, but by artful diplomacy. **took old sacks upon their asses**—Travellers in the East transport their luggage on

beasts of burden; the poorer sort stow all their necessaries, food, clothes, utensils together, in a woollen or hair-cloth sack, laid across the shoulders of the beast they ride upon. **Wine bottles, old, rent, and bound up**—Goat skins, which are better adapted for carrying liquor of any kind, fresh and good, than either earthenware, which is porous, or metallic vessels, which are soon heated by the sun. These skin-bottles are liable to be rent when old and much used; and there are various ways of mending them, by inserting a new piece of leather, or by gathering together the edges of the rent and sewing them in the form of a purse, or by putting in a round flat splinter of wood into the hole. **old shoes clouted**—Those who have but one ass or mule for themselves and baggage, frequently dismount, and walk—a circumstance which may account for the worn shoes of the pretended travellers. **bread dry and mouldy**—This must have been that commonly used by travellers—a sort of biscuit made in the form of large rings, about an inch thick, and four or five inches in diameter. Not being so well baked as our biscuits, it becomes hard and mouldy from the moisture left in the dough. It is usually soaked in water previous to being used. **6-14. they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal**—Arrived at the Israelitish head-quarters, the strangers obtained an interview with Joshua and the elders, to whom they opened their business. **The men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us**—The answer of the Israelites implied that they had no discretion, that their orders were imperative, and that if the strangers belonged to any of the native tribes, the idea of an alliance with them was unlawful, since God had forbidden it (Exodus, 23. 32; 34. 12; Deuteronomy, 7. 2). **9. from a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God**—They pretended to be actuated by religious motives in seeking to be allied with his people. But their studied address is worthy of notice in appealing to instances of God's miraculous doings at a distance, while they pass by those done in Canaan, as if the report of these had not yet reached their ears. **14, 15. the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord**—the mouldy appearance of their bread was, after examination, accepted as guaranteeing the truth of the story, and in this precipitate conclusion, the Israelites were guilty of excessive credulity and culpable negligence, in not asking by the high priest's Urim and Thummim the mind of God, before entering into the alliance. It is not clear, however, that had they applied for divine direction they would have been forbidden to spare and connect themselves with any of the Canaanite tribes who renounced idolatry and embraced and worshipped the true God. At least, no fault was found with them for making a covenant with the Gibeonites; while, on the other hand, the violation of it was severely punished (2 Samuel, 21. 1; and ch. 11. 19, 20). **16, 17. at the end of three days, they heard that they were neighbors, and dwelt among them**—This information was obtained in their further progress through the country; for as *v.* 17 should be rendered, "when the children of Israel journeyed they came to their cities." Gibeon was about eighteen or twenty miles from Gilgal. *Chephirah* (ch. 18. 26; Ezra, 2. 25; Nehemiah, 7. 29). Beeroth (2 Samuel, 4. 2), now *El Berich*, about twenty minutes' distance from El Jib (Gibeon.) Kirjathjearim, "the city of forest," now Kuryet-el-Enao. [ROBINSON.] **18-27. the children of Israel smote them not**—The

moral character of the Gibeonites' stratagem was bad. The princes of the congregation did not vindicate either the expediency or the lawfulness of the connection they had formed, but they felt the solemn obligations of their oath; and, although the popular clamor was loud against them, caused either by disappointment at losing the spoils of Gibeon, or by displeasure at the apparent breach of the divine commandment, they determined to adhere to their pledge, "because they had sworn by the Lord God of Israel." The Israelitish princes acted conscientiously; they felt themselves bound by their solemn promise, but to prevent the disastrous consequences of their imprudent haste, they resolved to degrade the Gibeonites to a servile condition as a means of preventing their people from being ensnared into idolatry, and thus acted up, as they thought, to the true spirit and end of the law. **hewers of wood and drawers of water**—The menials who performed the lowest offices and drudgery in the sanctuary; whence they were called Nethinims (1 Chronicles, 9. 2; Ezra, 2. 43; 8. 20); *i.e.*, given, appropriated. Their chastisement thus brought them into the possession of great religious privileges. (Psalm 84. 10.)

## CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1-5. FIVE KINGS WAR AGAINST GIBEON. **1. Adoni-zedek**—"lord of righteousness,"—nearly synonymous with Melchisedec, "king of righteousness." These names were common titles of the Jebusite kings. **Jerusalem**—The original name, "Salem" (Genesis, 14. 18; Psalm 76. 2), was superseded by that here given, which signifies "a peaceful possession," or, "a vision of peace," in allusion, as some think, to the strikingly symbolic scene (Genesis, 22. 14) represented on the mount, whereon that city was afterwards built. **inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were amongst them**—*i.e.*, the Israelites—had made an alliance with that people, and acknowledging their supremacy, were living on friendly terms of intercourse with them. **2. they feared greatly**—The dread inspired by the rapid conquests of the Israelites, had been immensely increased by the fact of a state so populous and so strong as Gibeon having found it expedient to submit to the power and terms of the invaders. **as one of the royal cities**—although itself a republic (ch. 9. 3), it was large and well fortified, like those places in which the chiefs of the country usually established their residence. **3. wherefore Adoni-zedek sent, saying, Come up unto me, and help me**—A combined attack was meditated on Gibeon, with a view not only to punish its people for their desertion of the native cause, but by its overthrow to interpose a barrier to the farther inroads of the Israelites. This confederacy among the mountaineers of Southern Palestine was formed and headed by the king of Jerusalem, because his territory was most exposed to danger, Gibeon being only six miles distant, and because he evidently possessed some degree of pre-eminence over his royal neighbors. **5. the five kings of the Amorites**—The settlement of this powerful and warlike tribe lay within the confines of Moab; but having also acquired extensive possessions on the south-west of the Jordan, their name, as the ruling power, seems to have been given to the region generally (2 Samuel, 21. 2), although Hebron was inhabited by Hittites or Hivites (ch. 11. 19), and Jerusalem by Jebusites (ch. 15. 63).

6-9. **JOSHUA RESCUES IT.** **6-8. the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua**—Their appeal was urgent, and their claim to protection irresistible, on the ground not only of kindness and sympathy, but of justice. In attacking the Canaanites, Joshua had received from God a general assurance of success (ch. I. 5). But the intelligence of so formidable a combination among the native princes seems to have depressed his mind with the anxious and dispiriting idea, that it was a chastisement for the hasty and inconsiderate alliance entered into with the Gibeonites. It was evidently to be a struggle for life and death not only to Gibeon, but to the Israelites. And in this view the divine communication that was made to him was seasonable and animating. He seems to have asked the counsel of God, and received an answer, before setting out on the expedition. **9. Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly**—This is explained in the following clause, where he is described as having accomplished, by a forced march of picked men, in one night, a distance of twenty-six miles, which, according to the slow pace of Eastern armies and caravans, had formerly been a three days' journey (ch. 9. 17).

10, 11. **GOD FIGHTS AGAINST THEM WITH HAILSTONES.** **10, 11. The Lord discomfitted them**—*Heb.*, terrified, confounded the Amorite allies, probably, by a fearful storm of lightning and thunder. So the word is usually employed (I Samuel, 7. 10; Psalm 18. 13; 144. 6). **and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon**—This refers to the attack of the Israelites upon the besiegers. It is evident that there had been much hard fighting around the heights of Gibeon, for the day was far spent ere the enemy took to flight. **chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon**—*i.e.*, the House of Caves, of which there are still traces existing. There were two contiguous villages of that name, upper and nether. Upper Beth-horon was nearest Gibeon—about ten miles distant, and approached by a gradual ascent through a long and precipitous ravine. This was the first stage of the flight. The fugitives had crossed the high ridge of upper Beth-horon, and were in full flight down the descent to Beth-horon the Nether. The road between the two places is so rocky and rugged, that there is a path made by means of steps cut into the rock. [ROBINSON.] Down this path Joshua continued his victorious rout. Here it was that the Lord interposed, assisting his people by means of a storm, which, having been probably gathering all day, burst with such irresistible fury, that "they were more which died with hailstones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." The oriental hailstorm is a terrific agent; the hailstones are masses of ice, large as walnuts, and sometimes as two fists; their prodigious size, and the violence with which they fall, make them always very injurious to property, and often fatal to life. The miraculous feature of *this* tempest, which fell on the Amorite army, was the entire preservation of the Israelites from its destructive ravages.

12-15. **THE SUN AND MOON STAND STILL AT THE WORD OF JOSHUA.** **12-15. Then spake Joshua to the Lord...and said in the sight of all Israel, Sun, stand still...and thou, Moon**—The inspired author here breaks off the thread of his history of this miraculous victory, to introduce a quotation from an ancient poem, in which the mighty acts of that day were commemorated. The passage, which is parenthetical, contains a *poetical* description of the victory which was miraculously gained by the help of God, and forms an extract from "the book

of Jasher," *i.e.*, "the upright"—an anthology, or collection of national songs, in honor of renowned and eminently pious heroes. The language of a poem is not to be literally interpreted, and therefore, when the sun and moon are personified, addressed as intelligent beings, and represented as standing still, the explanation is, that the light of the sun and moon was supernaturally prolonged by the same laws of refraction and reflection that ordinarily cause the sun to appear above the horizon, when he is in reality below it. [KEIL, BUSH.] Gibeon (a hill) was now at the back of the Israelites, and the height would soon have intercepted the rays of the setting sun. The valley of Ajalon (stags) was before them, and so near, that it was sometimes called "the valley of Gibeon." (Isaiah, 28. 21.) It would seem, from *v.* 14, that the command of Joshua was in reality a prayer to God for the performance of this miracle; and that, although the prayers of eminently good men like Moses often prevailed with God, never was there on any other occasion so astonishing a display of divine power made in behalf of his people, as in answer to the prayer of Joshua. Ver. 15 is the end of the quotation from Jasher; and it is necessary to notice this, as the fact described in it is recorded in due course, and the same words, by the sacred historian, *v.* 43.

**THE FIVE KINGS HANGED.**—Ver. 16-27. **16-27. these five kings hid themselves in a cave** (*Heb.*, the cave) **at Makkedah**—The pursuit was continued, without interruption, to Makkedah, at the foot of the western mountains, where Joshua seems to have halted with the main body of his troops, while a detachment was sent forward to scour the country in pursuit of the remaining stragglers, a few of whom succeeded in reaching the neighboring cities. The last act, probably the next day, was the disposal of the prisoners, among whom the five kings were consigned to the infamous doom of being slain (Deuteronomy, 20. 16, 17), and then their corpses suspended on five trees till the evening. **24. put your feet upon the necks of these kings**—not as a barbarous insult, but a symbolical action, expressive of a complete victory (Deuteronomy, 43. 29; Psalm 110, 5; Malachi, 4. 3).

**SEVEN MORE KINGS CONQUERED.**—Ver. 28-42. **28-42. that day Joshua took Makkedah**—In this and the following verses is described the rapid succession of victory and extermination which swept the whole of Southern Palestine into the hands of Israel. "All those kings and their lands did Joshua take *at one time*, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal."

## CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1-9. **DIVERS KINGS OVERCOME AT THE WATERS OF MEROM. 1-9 And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard those things**—The scene of the sacred narrative is here shifted to the north of Canaan, where a still more extensive confederacy was formed among the ruling powers, to oppose the further progress of the Israelites. Jabin ("the Intelligent"), which seems to have been a hereditary title (Judges, 4. 2), took the lead, from Hazor being the capital of the northern region (*v.* 10). It was situated on the borders of lake Merom. The other cities mentioned must have been in the vicinity, though their exact position is

unknown. **2. the kings that were on the north of the mountains**—the Antilibanus district. **the plains south of Chinneroth**—the northern part of the Arabah, or valley of the Jordan. **the valley**—the low and level country, including the plain of Sharon. **borders of Dor on the west**—the highlands of Dor, reaching to the town of Dor, on the Mediterranean coast, below Mount Carmel. **3. the Canaanite on the east and on the west**—a particular branch of the Canaanitish population who occupied the western bank of the Jordan as far northward as the sea of Galilee, and also the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. **under Hermon**—now Jebel-es-sheikh, was the northern boundary of Canaan on the east of the Jordan. **land of Mizpeh**—now Cole-Syria. **4, 5. they went out as the sand upon the sea-shore in multitude**—The chiefs of these several tribes were summoned by Jabin, being all probably tributary to the kingdom of Hazor; and their combined forces, according to Josephus, amounted to 300,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 20,000 war-chariots. **with horses and chariots very many**—The war-chariots were probably like those of Egypt, made of wood, but nailed and tipped with iron. These appear for the first time in the Canaanite war, to aid this last determined struggle against the invaders; and “it was the use of these which seem to have fixed the place of rendezvous by the lake Merom (now Huleh), along whose level shores they could have full play for their force.” A host so formidable in numbers, as well as in military equipments, was sure to alarm and dispirit the Israelites. Joshua, therefore, was favored with a renewal of the divine promise of victory (v. 6), and thus encouraged, he, in the full confidence of faith, set out to face the enemy. **to-morrow, about this time, will I deliver them up all slain before Israel**—As it was impossible to have marched from Gilgal to Merom in one day, we must suppose Joshua already moving northward, and within a day’s distance of the Canaanite camp, when the Lord gave him this assurance of success. With characteristic energy he made a sudden advance, probably during the night, and “on the morrow fell” upon them like a thunderbolt, when scattered along the rising grounds (Sept.), before they had time to rally on the plain. In the sudden panic “the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them.” The rout was complete, some went westward over the mountains, above the gorge of the Leontes, to Sidon and Misrephat-Maim (glass-smelting houses), in its neighborhood, and others eastward to the plain of Mizpeh. **they left none remaining**—of those whom they overtook. All those who fell into their hands alive were slain. **9. Joshua did as the Lord (v. 6) bade him**—Houghing the horses is done by cutting the sinews and arteries of their hinder legs, so that they not only become hopelessly lame, but bleed to death. The reasons for this special command were, that the Lord designed to lead the Israelites to trust in Him, not in military resources (Psalm 20. 7); to shew that in the land of promise there was no use of horses, and, finally, to discourage their travelling, as they were to be an agricultural, not a trading people. **11. he burnt Hazor with fire**—calmly and deliberately, doubtless, according to divine direction. **13. as for the cities that stood still in their strength**—*lit.*, “on their heaps.” It was a Phœnician custom to build cities on heights, natural or artificial. [HENGSTENBERG.] **16. So Joshua took all the land**—Here follows a general view of the conquest. The division of the country there into five parts; viz., the hills,

the land of Goshen, *i.e.*, a pastoral land near Gibeon (ch. 10. 41); the valley, the plains, the mountains of Israel, *i.e.*, Carmel, rests upon a diversity of geographical positions, which is characteristic of the region. **17. from the mount Halak** (*Heb.*, the smooth mountain), **that goeth up to Seir**—an irregular line of white naked hills, about eighty feet high, and seven or eight geographical miles in length, that cross the whole Ghor, eight miles south of the Dead Sea, probably “the ascent of Akrabbim.” [ROBINSON.] **unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon**—the city or temple of the God of Destiny, in Baalbec. **23. Joshua took the whole land**—The battle of the lake of Merom was to the north what the battle of Beth-horon was to the south; more briefly told, but less complete in its consequences; but still the decisive conflict by which the whole northern region of Canaan fell into the hands of Israel. [STANLEY.]

## CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1-6. THE TWO KINGS WHOSE COUNTRIES MOSES TOOK AND DISPOSED OF. **1. Now these are the kings of the land which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan**—This chapter contains a recapitulation of the conquests made in the promised land, with the additional mention of some places not formerly noticed in the sacred history. The river Arnon on the south, and Mount Hermon on the north, were the respective boundaries of the land acquired by the Israelites beyond Jordan (see on Numbers, 21. 21; Deuteronomy, 2. 36; 3. 6-16).

7-24. THE ONE-AND-THIRTY KINGS ON THE WEST SIDE OF JORDAN, WHICH JOSHUA SMOTE. **7. Baal-gad even unto Halak**—see on ch. 11. 17. A list of thirty-one chief towns is here given; and, as the whole land contained a superficial extent of only fifteen miles in length, by fifty in breadth, it is evident that these capital cities belonged to petty and insignificant kingdoms. With a few exceptions, they were not the scenes of any important events recorded in the sacred history, and therefore do not require a particular notice.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1-33. BOUNDS OF THE LAND NOT YET CONQUERED. **1. Now Joshua was old and stricken in years**—He was probably above a hundred years old; for the conquest and survey of the land occupied about seven years, the partition one; and he died at the age of 110 years (ch. 24. 29). The distribution, as well as the conquest of the land, was included in the mission of Joshua; and his advanced age supplied a special reason for entering on the immediate discharge of that duty—*viz.*, of allocating Canaan amongst the tribes of Israel, not only the parts already won, but those also which were still to be conquered. **2-6. This is the land that yet remaineth**—*i.e.*, to be acquired. This section forms a parenthesis, in which the historian briefly notices the districts yet unsubdued—*viz.*, first, the whole country of the Philistines—a narrow tract stretching about sixty miles along the Mediterranean coast,

and that of the Geshurites to the south of it (1 Samuel, 27. 8). Both included that portion of the country "from Sihor which is before Egypt," a small brook near El-Arish, which on the east was the southern boundary of Canaan, "to Ekron," the most northerly of the five chief lordships or principalities of the Philistines. **also the Avites: from (on) the south**—The two clauses are thus connected in the Septuagint and many other versions. On being driven out (Deuteronomy, 2. 23), they established themselves in the south of Philistia. The second division of the unconquered country comprised all **the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah (the cave) that is beside the Sidonians**—a mountainous region of Upper Galilee, remarkable for its caves and fastnesses, eastward **unto Aphek (now Afka) in Lebanon, to the borders of the Ammonites**—a portion of the north-eastern territory that had belonged to Og. The third district that remained unsubdued was, **5. all the land of the Giblites**—their capital was Gebal or Bylbos (*Gr.*) on the Mediterranean, forty miles north of Sidon. **all Lebanon towards the sunrising**—*i.e.*, Antilibanus; the eastern ridge, which has its proper termination in Hermon. **entering in of Hamath**—the valley of Baalbec. **6, 7. all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Mesrephath-maim**—(see on ch. II. 8), that is, "all the Sidonians and Phœnicians." **them will I drive out**—The fulfilment of this promise was conditional. In the event of the Israelites proving unfaithful or disobedient, they would not subdue the districts now specified, and, in point of fact, the Israelites never possessed them, though the inhabitants were subjected to the power of David and Solomon. **only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance**—The parenthetic section being closed, the historian here resumes the main subject of this chapter—the order of God to Joshua to make an immediate allotment of the land. The method of distribution by lot was, in all respects, the best that could have been adopted, as it prevented all ground of discontent, as well as charges of arbitrary or partial conduct, on the part of the leaders; and its being announced in the life of Moses (Numbers, 33. 54), as the system according to which the allocations to each tribe should be made, was intended to lead the people to the acknowledgment of God as the proprietor of the land, and having the entire right to its disposal. Moreover, a solemn appeal to the lot showed it to be the dictate, not of human, but divine wisdom. It was used, however, only in determining the part of the country where a tribe was to be settled—the extent of the settlement was to be decided on a different principle (Numbers, 26. 54) and what proves the overruling control of God, each tribe received the possession predicted by Jacob (Genesis, 49.) and by Moses (Deuteronomy, 33). **8. with whom**—*Heb.* "him." The antecedent is evidently to Manasseh, not, however, the half tribe just mentioned, but the other half; for the historian, led, as it were, by the sound of the word, breaks off to describe the possessions beyond Jordan already assigned to Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh (see on Numbers, 32; Deuteronomy, 3. 8-17). It may be proper to remark that it was wise to put these boundaries on record, as, in case of any misunderstanding or dispute arising about the exact limits of each district or property, an appeal could always be made to this authoritative document, and a full knowledge as well as grateful sense obtained of what they had received from God (Psalm 16. 5, 6).



## CHAPTER XIV.

Ver. 1-5. **THE NINE TRIBES AND A-HALF TO HAVE THEIR INHERITANCE BY LOT.** **1. These are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan**—This chapter forms the introduction to an account of the allocation of the land west of Jordan, or Canaan proper, to the nine tribes and a-half. It was also made by lot in presence of a select number of superintendents, appointed according to divine directions given to Moses (see on Numbers, 34. 16-29). In every thing pertaining to civil government, and even the division of the land, Joshua was the acknowledge chief. But in a matter to be determined by lot, a solemn appeal was made to God, and hence Eleazar, as high priest, is named before Joshua. **4. The children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim**—As two and a-half tribes were settled on the east of Jordan, and the Levites had no inheritance assigned them in land, there would have been only eight tribes and a-half to provide for. But Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, had been constituted two tribes (Genesis, 48. 5), and although Levi was excluded, the original number of the tribes of Israel was still preserved. **5. the children of Israel divided the land**—*i.e.*, they made the preliminary arrangements for the work. A considerable time was requisite for the survey and measurement.

6-15. **CALEB BY PRIVILEGE REQUIRETH AND OBTAINETH HEBRON.** **6-11. then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal; and Caleb said**—This incident is recorded here, because it occurred while the preparations were being made for casting the lots, which, it appears, were begun in Gilgal. The claim of Caleb to the mountains of Hebron as his personal and family possessions, was founded on a solemn promise of Moses, forty-five years before (Numbers, 14. 24; Deuteronomy, 1. 36), to give him that land on account of his fidelity. Being one of the nominees appointed to preside over the division of the country, he might have been charged with using his powers as a commissioner to his own advantage, had he urged his request in private; and therefore he took some of his brethren along with him as witnesses of the justice and propriety of his conduct. **12. give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day**—this highland region. **for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there**—The report of the spies who tried to kindle the flame of sedition and discontent, related chiefly to the people and condition of this mountain district, and hence it was promised as the reward of Caleb's truth, piety, and faithfulness. **13, 14. Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron unto Caleb for an inheritance**—Joshua, who was fully cognizant of the whole circumstances, not only admitted the claim, but in a public and earnest manner prayed for the divine blessing to succor the efforts of Caleb in driving out the idolatrous occupiers. **15. Kirjath-Arba**—*i.e.*, the city of Arba—a warrior among the native race remarkable for strength and stature. **the land had rest from war**—Most of the kings having been slain and the natives dispirited, there was no general or systematic attempts to resist the progress and settlement of the Israelites.

## CHAPTER XV.

**I-12. BORDERS OF THE LOT OF JUDAH. 1. This then was the lot of the tribe of Judah**—In what manner the lot was drawn on this occasion the sacred historian does not say; but it is probable that the method adopted was similar to that described in ch. 18. Though the general survey of the country had not been completed, some rough draught or delineation of the first conquered part must have been made, and satisfactory evidence obtained, that it was large enough to furnish three cantons, before all the tribes cast lots for them; and they fell to Judah, Ephraim, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The lot of Judah came first, in token of the pre-eminence of that tribe over all the others; and its destined superiority thus received the visible sanction of God. The territory assigned to it as a possession, was large and extensive, being bounded on the south by the wilderness of Zin, and the southern extremity of the Salt Sea (Numbers, 34. 3-5); on the east, by that sea, extending to the point where it receives the waters of the Jordan; on the north, by a line drawn nearly parallel to Jerusalem, across the country, from the northern extremity of the Salt Sea to the southern limits of the Philistine territory, and to the Mediterranean; and on the west this sea was its boundary, as far as Sihor (Wady El-Arish). **2. the bay**—*Heb.*, the “tongue.” It pushes its waters out in this form to a great distance. [ROBINSON.] **3. Maaleh-acrabbim**—*Heb.*, the ascent of Scorpions; a pass in the “bald mountain” (see on ch. 11. 17), probably much infested by these venomous reptiles. **5. the end**—*i.e.*, the mouth of the Jordan. **6. Beth-hogla**—now *Ain Hadjla*, a fine spring of clear and sweet water, at the northern extremity of the Dead Sea, about two miles from the Jordan. [ROBINSON.] **Betharabah**—the house, or place of solitude, in the desert of Judah (*v.* 61). **stone of Bohan the son of Reuben**—the sepulchral monument of a Reubenite leader, who had been distinguished for his bravery, and had fallen in the Canaanite war. **7. Achor**—(see on ch. 7. 26). **Adummim**—a rising ground in the wilderness of Jericho, on the south of the little brook that flowed near Jericho (ch. 16. 1). **En-shemesh**—the fountain of the sun; “either the present well of the apostle, below Bethany, on the road to Jericho, or the fountain near to St. Saba.” [ROBINSON.] **Enrogel**—the fuller’s fountain, on the south-east of Jerusalem, below the spot where the valley of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom unite.

**13-15. CALEB’S PORTION AND CONQUEST. 13. unto Caleb he gave a part among the children of Judah**—(see on ch. 14. 6-15). **14. Drove thence the three sons of Anak**—rather three chiefs of the Anakim race. This exploit is recorded to the honor of Caleb, as the success of it was the reward of his trust in God. **15. Debir**—oracle. Its former name, “Kirjath-sepher, signifies “city of the book,” being, probably a place where public registers were kept.

**16-20. OTHNIEL, FOR HIS VALOR HATH ACHSAH TO WIFE. 16-20. He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher**—This offer was made as an incentive to youthful bravery (see on 1 Samuel, 17. 25); and the prize was won by Othniel, Caleb’s younger brother (Judges, 1, 13; 3. 9). This was the occasion of drawing out the latent energies of him who was destined to be the first judge in Israel. **18. As she came unto him**—*i.e.*, when about to remove from her father’s to her husband’s house. She suddenly

alighted from her traveling equipage—a mark of respect to her father, and a sign of making some request. She had urged Othniel to broach the matter, but he not wishing to do what appeared like evincing a grasping disposition, she resolved herself to speak out, and taking the advantage of the parting scene, when a parent's heart was likely to be tender, begged that, as her marriage portion consisted of a field which, having a southern exposure, was comparatively an arid and barren waste, he would add the adjoining one, which abounded in excellent springs. The request being reasonable, was granted; and the story conveys this important lesson in religion, that if earthly parents are ready to bestow on their children that which is good, much more will our heavenly Father give every necessary blessing to them who ask Him.

21-63. CITIES OF JUDAH. 21-33. **The uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah**—There is given a list of cities within the tribal territory of Judah, arranged in four divisions, corresponding to the districts of which it consisted—the cities in the southern part (21-32)—those in the low lands (33-47), and those in the high lands (48-60)—those in the desert (61, 62). The best idea of the relative situation of these cities will be got from looking at the map.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 14. **THE GENERAL BORDERS OF THE SONS OF JOSEPH. 1. The lot of the children of Joseph fell**—*Heb.*, went forth, referring either to the lot as drawn out of the urn, or to the tract of land thereby assigned. The first four verses describe the territory allotted to the family of Joseph, in the rich domains of central Palestine. It was drawn in one lot, that the brethren might be contiguously situated; but it was afterwards divided. The southern boundary only is described here, that on the north being irregular and less defined (ch. 17. 10, 11), is not mentioned. **mount Beth-el**—the ridge south of Beth-el. **water of Jericho**—(2 Kings, 2. 19), at the point of its junction with the Jordan. Having described the position of Joseph's family generally, the historian proceeds to define the territory; first, of Ephraim.

5-9. **THE BORDERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF EPHRAIM. 5-9. the border of their inheritance was Ataroth-adar**—Ataroth-adar (now Atara), four miles south of Jetta [ROBINSON], is fixed on as a centre, through which a line is drawn from upper Beth-horon to Michmethath, showing the western limit of their actual possessions. The tract beyond that line to the sea was still unconquered. **6, 7. Michmethath on the north side**—The northern boundary is traced from this point eastward to the Jordan. **8. from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah**—it is retraced from east to west to describe the prospective and intended boundary, which was to reach to the sea, Kanah (reedy,) flows into the Mediterranean. **9. separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of Manasseh**—(ch. 17. 9,) because it was found that the tract allotted to Ephraim was too small in proportion to its population and power. **10. They drave not out the Canaanites, but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute**—This is the first mention of the fatal policy of the Israelites, in neglecting the Divine command (Deuteronomy, 20, 16,) to exterminate the idolaters.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1-6. LOT OF MANASSEH. **1. There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh**—Ephraim was mentioned, as the more numerous and powerful branch of the family of Joseph (Genesis, 48. 19, 20), but Manasseh still retained the right of primogeniture, and had a separate inheritance assigned. **Machir**—his descendants. **the father of Gilead**—though he had a son of that name (Numbers, 26, 29; 27. 1), yet, as is evident from the use of the *Heb.* article, reference is made, not to the person, but the province of Gilead. Father here means lord or possessor of Gilead; and this view is confirmed by the fact, that it was not Machir but his descendants who subdued Gilead and Bashan (Numbers, 32, 41; Deuteronomy, 3. 13-15). These Machirites had their portion on the east side of Jordan. The western portion of land, allotted to the tribe of Manasseh, was divided into ten portions, because the male descendants who had sons, consisted of five families, to which, consequently, five shares were given; and the sixth family, viz., the posterity of Hopher, being all females, the five daughters of Zelophehad, were, on application to the valuers, endowed each with an inheritance in land (see on Numbers, 27, 11).

7-11. THIS COAST. **the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath**—the southern boundary is here traced from the East. Asher (now Yasir), the starting point, was a town fifteen Roman miles east of Sichem, and anciently a place of importance. **9. The coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river**—The line which separated the possessions of the two brothers from each other ran to the south of the stream, and thus the river was in the territory of Manasseh; but the cities which were upon the river, though all were within the limits of Manasseh's possessions, were assigned partly to Ephraim, and partly to Manasseh; those on the south side being given to the former; those upon the north to the latter. [KEIL.] It appears (*v.* 10.) that Manasseh was still further interlaced with other neighboring tribes. **Beth-shean and her towns**—*Gr.*, Scythopolis (now Beisan), in the valley of the Jordan, towards the east end of the plain of Jezreel. "Beth-shean" means "house of rest;" so called from its being the halting place for caravans travelling between Syria or Midian, and Egypt, and the great station for the commerce between these countries for many centuries. **Ibleam and her towns**—in the neighborhood of Megiddo (2 Kings. 9. 27). **the inhabitants of Dor and her towns**—(now Tantoura) anciently a strong fortress; a wall of wild precipitous rock defended the shore fortifications against attack from the land side. **En-dor and her towns**—situated on a rocky eminence, four Roman miles south of Tabor. **three countries**—districts or provinces. It is computed that Manasseh possessed in Asher and Issachar portions of ground to the extent of more than 200 square miles. **Taanach and Megiddo**—These were near to each other, and they are generally mentioned in Scripture together. They were both royal and strongly fortified places (see on Judges, 1. 27).

12, 13. CANAANITES NOT DRIVEN OUT. **12, 13. Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities**—indolence, a love of ease; perhaps a mistaken humanity, arising from a disregard or forgetfulness

of the divine command, a decreasing principle of faith and zeal in the service of God, were the causes of their failure.

14-18. **THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH SUE FOR ANOTHER LOT. 14-18. The children of Joseph spake unto Joshua**—The two tribes join in laying a complaint before the leader, as to the narrow boundaries of their allotment, and its insufficiency to be the residence of tribes so vastly increased. But Joshua's answer was full of wisdom as well as patriotism. Knowing their character, he treated them accordingly, and sarcastically turned all their arguments against themselves. Thus he rebuked their unbelief and cowardice. **Mount Ephraim**—called so here by anticipation, The Gilboa range between Beth-shean and the plains of Jezreel is meant, anciently covered with an extensive forest. **iron chariots**—unusually strengthened with that metal, and perhaps armed with projecting scythes.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

I. **THE TABERNACLE SET UP AT SHILOH. 1. The whole congregation assemble together at Shiloh**—The main body of the Israelites had been diminished by the separation of the three tribes, Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh, into their respective allotments, and the country having been in a great measure subdued, the camp was removed to Shiloh—now Seilun. It was twenty or twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem, twelve north of Bethel, and ten south of Shechem, and embosomed in a rugged and romantic glen. This sequestered spot in the heart of the country might have been recommended by the dictates of convenience; there the allotment of the territory could be most conveniently made—north, south, east and west, to the different tribes. But “the tabernacle of the congregation was also set up there,” and its removal therefore must have been made or sanctioned by divine intimation (Deuteronomy, 12. 11). It remained in Shiloh for more than 300 years (1 Samuel 4. 1-11).

2-9. **THE REMAINDER OF THE LAND DESCRIBED. 2. there remained seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance**—The selection of Shiloh for the seat of worship, together with the consequent removal of the camp thither, had necessarily interrupted the casting of lots, which was commenced by fixing localities for the tribes of Judah and Joseph. Various causes led to a long delay in resuming it. The satisfaction of the people with their change to so pleasant and fertile a district, their preference of a nomad life, a love of ease, and reluctance to renew the war, seem to have made them indifferent to the possession of a settled inheritance. But Joshua was too much alive to the duty laid on him by the Lord, to let matters continue in that state; and accordingly, since a general conquest of the land had been made, he resolved to proceed immediately with the lot, believing that when each tribe should receive its inheritance, a new motive would arise to lead them to exert themselves in securing the full possession. **3. how long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you**—this reproof conveys the impression that the seven tribes were dilatory to a criminal extent. **4-9. give out from among you three men for each tribe**—Though the lot determined the

part of the country where each tribe was to be located, it could not determine the extent of territory which might be required; and the dissatisfaction of the children of Joseph with the alleged smallness of their possession, gave reason to fear that complaints might arise from other quarters, unless precautions were taken to make a proper distribution of the land. For this purpose a commission was given to twenty-one persons—three chosen from each of the seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance, to make an accurate survey of the country. "They went and passed through the land and described it by cities in seven parts in a book" (*v.* 9); dividing the land according to its value, and the worth of the cities which it contained, into seven equal portions. This was no light task to undertake. It required learning and intelligence which they or their instructors had, in all probability, brought with them out of Egypt. Accordingly, Josephus says that the survey was performed by men expert in geometry. And, in fact, the circumstantial account which is given of the boundaries of each tribe and its situation, well proves it to have been the work of no mean or incompetent hands.

**IO. DIVIDED BY LOT. 10. Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord**—before the tabernacle, where the divine presence was manifested, and which associated with the lot the idea of divine sanction. **11. The lot of Benjamin came up**—It has been supposed that there were two urns or vessels from which the lots were drawn; one containing the names of the tribes: the other containing those of the seven portions; and that the two were drawn out simultaneously. **The coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph**—Thus the prophecy of Moses respecting the inheritance of Benjamin was remarkably accomplished (see on Deuteronomy, 33. 12].

## CHAPTER XIX.

**Ver. 1-9. THE LOT OF SIMEON. 1. The second lot came forth to Simeon**—The next lot that was drawn at Shiloh, giving the tribe of Simeon his inheritance within the territory, which had been assigned to that of Judah. The knowledge of Canaan possessed by the Israelites, when the division of the land commenced, was but very general, being derived from the rapid sweep they had made over it during the course of conquest; and it was on the ground of that rough survey alone, that the distribution proceeded, by which Judah received an inheritance. Time showed that this territory was too large (*v.* 9), either for their numbers, however great, to occupy, and their arms to defend, or too large in proportion to the allotment of the other tribes. Justice therefore required, what kind and brotherly feeling readily dictated, a modification of their possession, and a part of it was appropriated to Simeon. By thus establishing it within the original domain of another tribe, the prophecy of Jacob in regard to Simeon was fulfilled (Genesis, 49. 7); for from its boundaries being not traced, there is reason to conclude that its people were divided and dispersed among those of Judah; and though one group of its cities named (2-6) give the idea of a compact district, as it is usually represented by mapmakers, the other group (7, 8,) were sit-

uated, two in the south, and two elsewhere, with tracts of the country around them,

**10-16. OF ZEBULUN. 10-16. the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun**—The boundaries of the possession assigned to them extended from the Lake of Cinneroth (Sea of Galilee) on the east to the Mediterranean on the west; for although they do not seem at first to have touched on the western shore—a part of Manasseh running north into Asher—(ch. 17. 10), they afterwards did, according to the prediction of Moses (Deuteronomy, 33. 19). The extent from south to north cannot be very exactly traced; the sites of many of the places through which the boundary line is drawn being unknown. Some of the cities were of note.

**17-23. OF ISSACHAR. 17-20. the fourth lot came out to Issachar**—Instead of describing the boundaries of this tribe, the inspired historian gives a list of its principal cities. These cities are all in the eastern part of the plain of Esdraelon.

**24-31. OF ASHER. 24-31. the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher**—The western boundary is traced from north to south through the cities mentioned; the site of which, however, is unknown. **to carmel and Shihor-libnath**—*i.e.*, the black or muddy river; probably the Nahr Belka, below Dor (Tantoura); for that town belonged to Asher (ch. 17. 10). Thence the boundary line turned eastward to Beth-dagon, a town at the junction of Zebulun and Naphtali, and ran northwards as far as Cabul, with other towns, amongst which is mentioned (*v.* 28) "great Zidon," so called on account of its being even then the flourishing metropolis of the Phœnicians. Though included in the inheritance of Asher, this town was never possessed by them (Judges, 1. 31). **29. and then the coast turneth to Ramah**—now El-Hamra, which stood where the Leontes (Litany) ends its southern course and flows westward. **and to the strong city Tyre**—the original city appears to have stood on the main land, and was well fortified. From Tyre the boundary ran to Hosah, an inland town: and then passing the unconquered district of Achzib (Judges, 1. 31), terminated at the sea-coast.

**32-39. OF NAPHTALI. 32-39. the sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali**—Although the cities mentioned have not been discovered, it is evident, from Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh, *i.e.*, on the north-west of Lake Merom (Judges, 4. 11), that the boundary described (*v.* 34) ran from the south-west towards the north-east, up to the sources of the Jordan. **Aznoth-tabor**—on the east of Tabor towards the Jordan, for the border ran thence to Hukkok, touching upon that of Zebulun; and as the territory of Zebulun did not extend as far as the Jordan, Aznoth-tabor and Hukkok must have been border towns on the line which separated Naphtali from Issachar. **to Judea upon Jordan toward the sun-rising**—The sixty cities, Havoth-jair, which were on the eastern side of the Jordan, opposite Naphtali, were reckoned as belonging to Judah, because Jair, their possessor, was a descendant of Judah (1 Chronicles, 2. 4-22) [KEIL.]

**40-48. OF DAN. 40-46. the seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan**—It lay on the west of Benjamin, and consisted of portions surrendered by Judah and Ephraim. Its boundaries are not stated, as they were easily distinguishable from the relative position of Dan to the three adjoining tribes. **47. the children of Dan went up to fight against**

**Leshem**—The Danites, finding their inheritance too small, meditated enlarging its boundaries by the sword; and having conquered Leshem (Laish), planted a colony there, calling the new settlement by the name of Dan (see on Judges, 18).

47-51. THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL GIVE AN INHERITANCE TO JOSHUA.

**49-51. According to the word of the Lord, they gave him the city which he asked**—It was most proper that the great leader should receive an inheritance suited to his dignity, and as a reward for his public services. But the gift was not left to the spontaneous feelings of a grateful people. It was conferred, "according to the word of the Lord"—probably an unrecorded promise, similar to what had been made to Caleb (ch. 14. 9). **Timnath-serah**—or Heres, on mount Gaash (Judges, 2. 9). Joshua founded it, and was afterwards buried there (ch. 24. 30). **51. These are the inheritances**—This verse is the formal close of the section which narrates the history of the land distribution; and to stamp it with due importance, the names of the commissioners are repeated, as well as the spot where so memorable a transaction took place.

## CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1-6. THE LORD COMMANDS THE CITIES OF REFUGE. **1. the Lord spake unto Joshua, Appoint out for you cities of refuge**—(see Numbers, 35. 9-28; Deuteronomy, 19. 1-13). The command here recorded was given on their going to occupy their allotted settlements. The sanctuaries were not temples or altars, as in other countries, but inhabited cities; and the design was not to screen criminals, but only to afford the homicide protection from the vengeance of the deceased's relatives, until it should have been ascertained whether the death had resulted from accident and momentary passion, or from premeditated malice. The institution of the cities of refuge, together with the rules prescribed for the guidance of those who sought an asylum within their walls, was an important provision, tending to secure the ends of justice as well as of mercy. **4. he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city**—It was the place of public resort; and on arriving there he related his tale of distress to the elders, who were bound to give him shelter and the means of support, until the local authorities (*v.* 6) having carefully investigated the case, should have pronounced the decision. If found guilty, the man-slayer was surrendered to the blood-avenger: if extenuating circumstances appeared, he was to remain in the city of refuge, where he would be safe from the vindictive feelings of his pursuers; but he forfeited the privilege of immunity the moment he ventured beyond the walls. **until the death of the high priest**—his death secured the complete deliverance of the man-slayer from his sin, only because he had been anointed with the holy oil (Numbers, 35. 25), the symbol of the Holy Ghost: and thus the death of the earthly High Priest became a type of that of Heavenly one (Hebrews, 9. 14. 15).

7-9. THE ISRAELITES APPOINT BY NAME THE CITIES OF REFUGE. **7-9. they appointed cities**—There were six: three on the west, and three on the east of Jordan. In the first instance, they were a provision of the criminal law of the Hebrews, necessary in the circumstances of



that people (see on Numbers, 35. 9-15; Deuteronomy, 19.); and at the same time they were designed also typically to point out the sinner's way to Christ (Hebrews, 6. 18).

## CHAPTER XXI.

**Ver. 1-8. EIGHT AND FORTY CITIES GIVEN BY LOT OUT OF THE OTHER TRIBES UNTO THE LEVITES. 1. Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites**—the most venerable and distinguished members of the three Levitical families who, on behalf of their tribe, applied for the special provision that had been promised them to be now awarded (see on Numbers, 35. 1-5). Their inheritance lay within the territory of every tribe. It was assigned in the same place and manner, and by the same commissioners as the other allotments; and while the people, knowing the important duties they were to perform, are described (*v.* 3) as readily conceding this "peculiar" to them: it had most probably been specified and reserved for their use, while the distribution of the land was in progress. **4-8. the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites**—The Levites were divided into Kohathites, Gershonites, Merarites. Among the former the family of Aaron were exclusively appointed to the priesthood, and all the rest were ranked in the common order of Levites. The first lot was drawn by the Kohathites; and the first of theirs again by the priests, to whom thirteen cities were granted, and ten to the rest of the Kohathites (*v.* 5); thirteen to the Gershonites (*v.* 6), and twelve to the Merarites (*v.* 7).

**9-42. THE CITIES OF THE PRIESTS. 9-40. they gave these cities which are mentioned by name**—It was overruled by the unerring providence of the divine lawgiver, that the cities of the priests lay within the territories of Judah and Benjamin; and this was a provision, the admirable wisdom and propriety of which was fully manifested on the schism that took place in the reign of Rehoboam. **41. all the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs**—This may appear too great a proportion compared with those of the other tribes. But it must be borne in mind, that the list given here contains the names of every Levitical city (see on 1 Chronicles, 6. 39-66); whereas, only those cities of the other tribes are mentioned, which lay on the frontier or along the boundary line. Besides, the Levites were not the exclusive inhabitants of those forty-eight cities; for there must have been also a considerable number of people kept there to cultivate the glebe lands and tend the cattle. Still further, the Levitical cities had nothing but "their suburbs—a limited circuit of ground—round about them;" whereas the other cities in Israel possessed a group of independent villages (see chaps 17. 18. 19.).

**43-45. GOD GAVE THEM REST. 43-45. The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers**—This is a general winding up of the history from ch. 13, which narrates the occupation of the land by the Israelites. All the promises made, whether to the people or to Joshua (ch. 1. 5), had been, or were in the course of being fulfilled; and the recorded experience of the Israelites (*v.* 45) is a ground of hope and confidence to the people of God in every age, that all other promises made to the Church will, in due time, be accomplished.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Ver. 1-9. JOSHUA DISMISSES THE TWO TRIBES AND A-HALF WITH A BLESSING. **1. then Joshua called the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh**—The general war of invasion being ended, and the enemy being in so dispirited and isolated a condition, that each tribe, by its own resources, or with the aid of its neighboring tribe, was able to repress any renewed hostilities; the auxiliary Israelites from the eastern side of the Jordan were now discharged from service. Joshua dismissed them with high commendations of their fidelity, and earnest admonitions to cultivate perpetual piety in life. The redundancy of the language is remarkable, and shows how important, in the judgment of the venerable leader, a steadfast observance of the divine law was to personal happiness, as well as national prosperity. **3. ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day**—For the space of seven years. **4-7. get ye unto your tents**—*i.e.*, home; for their families had been left in fortified towns (Numbers, 32. 17). **8. he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches**—In cattle, clothes, and precious metals. **divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren**—see on Numbers, 21. 25-39.

**10. THEY BUILD THE ALTAR OF TESTIMONY ON THEIR JOURNEY. 10. when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan...the children of Reuben...built there an altar**—This altar was probably an immense pile of stones and earth. The generality of our translators suppose that it was reared on the banks of the Jordan, within the limits of Canaan proper. But a little closer examination seems to make the conclusion irresistible that its position was on the eastern side of the river, for these two reasons: first, because it is said (*v.* 11) to have been built “over against,” or in the sight of the land of Canaan—not within it; and secondly, because the declared motive of the trans-Jordanic Israelites in erecting it was to prevent their brethren in Canaan ever saying “in time to come, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a barrier between us and you,” etc. Such a taunt would be obviously prevented, or confuted by the two tribes and a-half having on the eastern side of Jordan, within their own land, a fac simile of the altar at Shiloh, as a witness they acknowledged the same God, and practiced the same rites of worship as the brethren in Canaan.

**11-29. CONTENTION THEREUPON. 11-29. and the children of Israel heard say**—Fame speedily spread intelligence of what the trans-Jordanic tribes had done. The act being suspected of some idolatrous design, the whole tribes rose in a mass, and repairing to the tabernacle at Shiloh, resolved to declare war against the two tribes and a-half as apostates from God. On calmer and more mature considerations, however, they determined, in the first instance, to send a deputation consisting of the son of the high priest, and ten eminent persons from each tribe, to make inquiry into this rumored rebellion against God (Deuteronomy, 13. 13-15). The quality of the deputies evinced the deep solicitude that was felt on the occasion to maintain the purity of the divine worship throughout Israel. In the presumptive belief that the two tribes and a-half had really built an altar, the deputies expressed astonishment at their so soon falling into such a heinous crime as that of violating the

unity of divine worship (Exodus, 20. 24; Leviticus, 17. 8, 9; Deuteronomy, 12. 5-13), reminded their Eastern brethren of the disastrous consequences that were entailed on the nation at large by the apostasy at Peor, and by the sin of Achan, and finally exhorted them, if they felt the need of the tabernacle and altar, and repented of their rash choice in preferring worldly advantages to religious privileges, to remove to the western side of the Jordan, where the whole tribes would form a united and obedient community of worshippers. **21. then the children of Reuben, etc., answered**—repudiating, in the strongest terms, the alleged crime, and deponing that so far from entertaining the intention imputed to them, their only object was to perpetuate the memory of their alliance with Israel, and their adherence to the worship of Israel's God.

**30-34. THE DEPUTIES SATISFIED. 30-34. it pleased them**—The explanation not only gave perfect satisfaction to the deputies, but elicited from them expressions of unbounded joy and thankfulness. "Tis day we perceive that the Lord is among us," *i.e.*, by his gracious presence and preventing goodness, which has kept you from falling into the suspected sin, and rescued the nation from the calamity of a fratricidal war or providential Judgments. This episode reflects honor upon all parties, and shows that piety and zeal for the honor and worship of God animated the people that entered Canaan to an extent far beyond what was exemplified in many other periods of the history of Israel.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Ver. 1, 2. **JOSHUA'S EXHORTATION BEFORE HIS DEATH. 1. a long time after the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies** about fourteen years after the conquest of Canaan, and seven after the distribution of that country among the tribes. **2. Joshua called for all Israel**—the clause which follows seems to restrict this general expression as applicable only to the officers and representatives of the people. The place of assembly was most probably Shiloh. The occasion of convening it was the extreme age and approaching death of the venerable leader; and the purport of this solemn address was to animate the chosen people and their posterity to a faithful and unswerving continuance in the faith and worship of the God of Israel.

**3. BY FORMER BENEFITS. Ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you**—The modesty and humility of Joshua are remarkably displayed at the commencement of this address. Sinking all thoughts of his personal services, he ascribed the subjugation and occupation of Canaan entirely to the favoring presence and aid of God; and in doing so he spoke not more piously than truly. This had been promised (Deuteronomy, 1. 30; 3. 22); and the reality of the divine aid was seen in the rapid overthrow of the Canaanites, which had already led to the division of the whole land amongst the tribes.

**5-II. BY PROMISES. 5-II. The Lord your God, he shall expel them from before you, as the Lord your God has promised you, etc.**—The actual possessions which God had given were a pledge of the complete fulfilment of His promise in giving them the parts of the country still unconquered. But the accomplishment of the divine promise depended

upon their inviolable fidelity to God's law—on their keeping resolutely aloof from all familiar intercourse and intimate connections with the Canaanites, or in any way partaking of their idolatrous sins. In the event of their continuing in steadfast adherence to the cause of God, as happily distinguished the nation at that time, His blessing would secure them a course of brilliant and easy victories (Lev., 26. 7; Deu., 28. 7; 32. 30). **II. Take good heed, therefore, that ye love the Lord your God**—The sum of his exhortation is comprised in the love of God, which is the end or fulfilment of the law (Deu. 6. 5; II. 13; M. 22. 37).

12. BY THREATENINGS IN CASE OF DISOBEDIENCE. **12. Else if ye do in any wise go back and cleave to the remnant of those nations**—By "going back" is meant transgression of the divine law; and as marriage connexions with the idolatrous Canaanites would present many and strong temptations to transgress it, these were strictly prohibited (Ex. 34. 12-16; Deu. 7. 3). With his eye, as it were, upon those prohibitions, Joshua threatens them with the certain withdrawal of the divine aid in the further expulsion of the Canaanites; a threat founded on Ex. 23. 33; Nu. 33. 55; Deu. 7. 16.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Ver. 1. JOSHUA ASSEMBLING THE TRIBES. **1. Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel at Shechem**—Another and final opportunity of dissuading the people against idolatry is here described as taken by the aged leader, whose solicitude on this account arose from his knowledge of the extreme readiness of the people to conform to the manners of the surrounding nations. This address was made to the representatives of the people convened at Shechem, and which had already been the scene of a solemn renewal of the covenant (ch. 8. 30, 35). The transaction now to be entered upon being in principle and object the same, it was desirable to give it all the solemn impressiveness which might be derived from the memory of the former ceremonial, as well as from other sacred associations of the place (Gen. 12. 6, 7; 33. 18-20; 35. 2-4). **they presented themselves before God**—It is generally assumed that the ark of the covenant had been transferred on this occasion to Shechem; as on extraordinary emergencies it was for a time removed (Jud. 20. 1-18; I Sam. 4. 3; 2 Sam. 15. 24). But the statement, not necessarily implying this, may be viewed as expressing only the religious character of the ceremony. [HENG.]

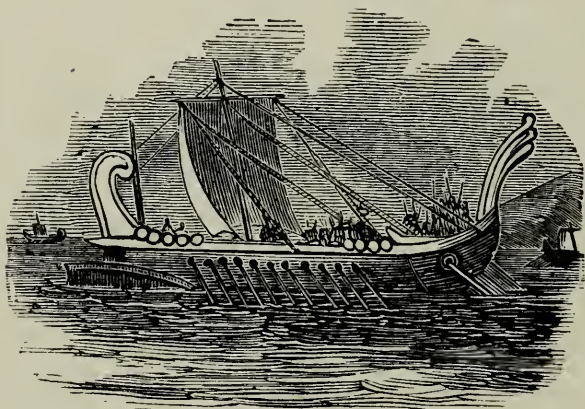
2-13. RELATES GOD'S BENEFITS. **2-13. Joshua said unto the people**—His address briefly recapitulated the principal proofs of the divine goodness to Israel from the call of Abraham to their happy establishment in the land of promise; and showed them that they were indebted for their national existence as well as their peculiar privileges, not to any merits of their own, but to the free grace of God. **on the other side of the flood**—The Uphrates, viz., at Ur. **Terah, the father of Abraham... and Nahor**—(see on Gen. 11. 27.) Though Terah had three sons, Nahor only is mentioned with Abraham, as the Israelites were descended from him on the mother's side through Rebekah and her nieces, Leah and Rachel. **served other gods**—Conjoining, like Laban,

the traditional knowledge of the true God with the domestic use of material images (Gen. 31. 19, 34). **3. took your father Abraham**—It was an irresistible impulse of divine grace which led the patriarch to leave his country and relatives, to migrate to Canaan, and live a "stranger and pilgrim" in that land. **4. gave unto Esau mount Seir**—(see on Gen. 36. 8, 9.) In order that he might be no obstacle to Jacob and his posterity being the exclusive heirs of Canaan. **12. sent the hornet**—A particular species of wasp which swarms in warm countries, and sometimes assumes the scourging character of a plague, or, as many think, it is a figurative expression for uncontrollable terror (Ex. 23. 27, 28). **14-28. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth**—After having enumerated so many grounds for national gratitude, Joshua calls on them to declare, in a public and solemn manner, whether they will be faithful and obedient to the God of Israel. He avowed this to be his own unalterable resolution, and urges them, if they were sincere in making a similar avowal, "to put away the strange gods that were among them"—a requirement which seems to imply that some were suspected of a strong hankering for, or concealed practice of idolatry, whether in the form of Zabaism—the fire-worship of their Chaldean ancestors, or the grosser superstitions of the Canaanites. **26. Joshua wrote these words in the books of the law of God**—Registered the engagements of that solemn covenant in the book of sacred history. **took a great stone**—According to the usage of ancient times to erect stone pillars as monuments of public transactions. **set it up under an oak**—Or terebinth, in all likelihood, the same as that at the root of which Jacob buried the idols, and charms found in his family. **that was by the sanctuary of the Lord**—Either the spot where the ark had stood, or else the place around, so called from that religious meeting as Jacob named Bethel the house of God.

**14-33. HIS AGE AND DEATH. 29, 30. Joshua died**—Lightfoot computes that he lived seventeen, others twenty-seven years after the entrance into Canaan. He was buried, according to the Jewish practice, within the limits of his own inheritance. The eminent public services he had long rendered to Israel, and the great amount of domestic comfort and national prosperity he had been instrumental in diffusing among the several tribes, were deeply felt—were universally acknowledged; and a testimonial in the form of a statue or obelisk would have been immediately raised to his honor, in all parts of the land, had such been the fashion of the times. The brief but noble epitaph by the historian is, Joshua "the servant of the Lord." **31. Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua**—The high and commanding character of this eminent leader, had given so decided a tone to the sentiments and manners of his contemporaries; and the memory of his fervent piety and many virtues, continued so vividly impressed on the memories of the people, that the sacred historian has recorded it to his immortal honor. "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua," and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua. **32. the bones of Joseph**—They had carried these venerable relics with them in all their migrations through the desert, and deferred the burial, according to the dying charge of Joseph himself, till they arrived in the promised land. The sarcophagus, in which his mummied body had been put, was brought thither by the Israelites, and probably buried when the tribe of Ephraim had obtained

their settlement, or at the solemn convocation described in this chapter. **in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver**—*Kesitah*, translated "piece of silver," is supposed to mean a lamb, the weights being in the form of lambs or kids, which were, in all probability, the earliest standard of value among pastoral people. The tomb that now covers the spot is a Mahomedan *Welee*, but there is no reason to doubt that the precious deposit of Joseph's remains may be concealed there at the present time. **33. Eleazar...died, and they buried him in mount Ephraim**—The sepulchre is at the modern village of Awertah, which, according to Jewish travellers, contains the graves also of Ithamar, the brother of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar. [VAN DE VELDE.]

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▲ ANCIENT SHIP.

THE  
BOOK OF JUDGES.

CHAPTER I.

**1-3. THE ACTS OF JUDAH AND SIMEON.** 1. **Now after the death of Joshua**—Probably not a long period, for the Canaanites seem to have taken advantage of that event to attempt recovering their lost position, and the Israelites were obliged to renew the war. **the children of Israel asked the Lord**—The divine council on this, as on other occasions, was sought by Urim and Thummim, by applying to the High Priest, who, according to Josephus, was Phinehas. **saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first**—The elders, who exercised the government in their respective tribes, judged rightly, that, in entering upon an important expedition, they should have a leader nominated by divine appointment, and, in consulting the oracle, they adopted a prudent course, whether the object of their inquiry related to the choice of an individual commander, or to the honour of precedency among the tribes. 2. **the Lord said, Judah shall go up**—The predicted pre-eminence, (Genesis, 49. 8,) was thus conferred upon Judah by divine direction, and its appointment to take the lead in the ensuing hostilities was of great importance, as the measure of success by which its arms were crowned, would animate the other tribes to make similar attempts against the Canaanites within their respective territories. **I have delivered the land into his hand**—not the whole country, but the district assigned for his inheritance. 3. **Judah said unto Simeon, Come up with me, that we may fight against the Canaanites**—Being conterminous tribes (Joshua, 19. 1, 2), they had a common interest, and were naturally associated in this enterprise.

**4-21. ADONI-BEZEK JUSTLY REQUITED.** **Bezek**—This place lay within the domain of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. 5. **found Adoni-bezek**—*i. e.*, lord of Bezek—he was “found,” *i. e.*, surprised and routed in a pitched battle, whence he fled; but being taken prisoner, he was treated with a severity unusual among the Israelites: for they “cut off his thumbs and great toes.” Barbarities of various kinds were commonly practiced on prisoners of war in ancient times, and the object of this particular mutilation of the hands and feet, was to disable them for military service ever after. The infliction of such a horrid cruelty on this Canaanite chief, would have been a foul stain on the character of the Israelites, if there were not reason for believing it was done by them as an act of retributive justice, and as such it was regarded by Adoni-bezek himself, whose conscience read his atrocious crimes in their punishment. 7. **threescore and ten kings**—So great a number will not appear strange, when it is considered that anciently every ruler of a city or large town was called a king. It is not improbable that, in that southern region of Canaan, there might, in earlier times, have been even more till a turbulent chief like Adoni-bezek devoured them in his insatiable ambition, 8

**Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it** — The capture of this important city, which ranks among the early incidents in the war of invasion (Joshua, 15. 63) is here noticed to account for its being in the possession of the Judahites; and they brought Adoni-bezek thither, in order, probably, that his fate being rendered so public, might inspire terror far and wide. Similar inroads were made into the other unconquered parts of Judah's inheritance. The story of Caleb's acquisition of Hebron is here repeated (Joshua, 15, 16-19).

**16. the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah** — Called the Kenite, as probably descended from the people of that name. (Numbers, 24. 21, 22.) If he might not himself, his posterity did accept the invitation of Moses (Numbers, 10. 32) to accompany the Israelites to Canaan. Their first encampment was in the "city of palm trees," — not Jericho, of course, which was utterly destroyed, but the surrounding district, perhaps En-ge-di, in early times called Hazezon-Tamat (Genesis, 14. 7), from the palm grove which sheltered it. Thence they removed from some unknown cause, and associating themselves with Judah, joined in an expedition against Arad, in the southern part of Canaan. (Numbers, 21. 1.) On the conquest of that district, some of this pastoral people pitched their tents there, while others migrated to the north (ch. 4. 17).

**17-25. and Judah went with Simeon his brother** — The course of the narrative is here resumed from *v.* 9, and an account given of Judah returning the services of Simeon (*v.* 3), by aiding in the prosecution of the war within the neighbouring tribes. **slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zepath**

— or Zephathah (2 Chronicles, 14. 10), a valley lying in the southern portion of Canaan. **Hormah** — destroyed in fulfilment of an early vow of the Israelites. (See on Numbers, 21. 1-3.) The confederate tribes pursuing their incursions in that quarter, came successively to Gaza, Askelon and Ekron, which they took. But the Philistines seem soon to have regained possession of these cities.

**19. the Lord was with Judah; but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley** — The war was of the Lord, whose omnipotent aid would have insured their success in every encounter, whether on the mountains or the plains, with foot soldiers or cavalry. It was distrust — the want of a simple and firm reliance on the promise of God — that made them afraid of the iron chariots. (See on Joshua, 11. 4-9.) **21. the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem** — Judah had expelled the people from their part of Jerusalem (*v.* 8). The border of the two tribes ran through the city — Israelites and natives must have been closely intermingled.

**22-26. SOME CANAANITES LEFT 22, 23. the house of Joseph** — the tribe of Ephraim as distinguished from Manasseh (*v.* 27). **24. the spies said, Shew us the entrance into the city** — *i. e.* the avenues to the city and the weakest part of the walls. **we will shew thee mercy** — The Israelites might employ these means of getting possession of a place which was divinely appropriated to them: they might promise life and rewards to this man, though he and all the Canaanites were doomed to destruction (Joshua, 2, 12-14);



but we may assume the promise was suspended on his embracing the true religion, or quitting the country, as he did. If they had seen him to be firmly opposed to either of these alternatives, they would not have constrained him by promises any more than by threats to betray his countrymen. But if they found him disposed to be serviceable, and to aid the invaders in executing the will of God, they might promise to spare him. **Luz**— See Genesis, 12. 8 ; 28. 19. 27-36. The same course of subjugation was carried on in the other tribes to a partial extent, and with varying success. Many of the natives, no doubt, during the progress of this exterminating war, saved themselves by flight, and became, it is thought, the first colonists in Greece, Italy, and other countries. But a large portion made a stout resistance, and retained possession of their old abodes in Canaan. In other cases, when the natives were vanquished, avarice led the Israelites to spare the idolators, contrary to the express command of God ; and their disobedience to his orders in this matter involved them in many troubles which this book describes.

## CHAPTER II.

**1-10. AN ANGEL SENT TO REBUKE THE PEOPLE AT BOCHIM.**  
**I. an angel came from Gilgal to Bochim**— We are inclined to think, from the authoritative tone of his language, that he was the Angel of the Covenant (Exodus, 23. 20 ; Joshua, 5. 14) ; the same who appeared in human form and announced himself captain of the Lord's host. His coming from Gilgal had a peculiar significance, for there the Israelites made a solemn dedication of themselves to God on their entrance into the promised land ; and the memory of that religious engagement, which the angel's arrival from Gilgal awakened, gave emphatic force to his rebuke of their apostacy. Bochim, "the weepers," was a name bestowed evidently in allusion to this incident or the place, which was at or near Shiloh. **I said, I will never break my covenant with you...but ye have not obeyed my voice**— The burden of the angel's remonstrance was, that God would inviolably keep his promise ; but they by their flagrant and repeated breaches of their covenant with him, had forfeited all claim to the stipulated benefits. Having disobeyed the will of God by voluntarily courting the society of idolators, and placing themselves in the way of temptation, He left them to suffer the punishment of their misdeeds. **4. 5. When the angel of the Lord spake these words, the people lifted up their voice and wept**— The angel's expostulation made a deep and painful impression. But the reformation was but temporary, and the gratifying promise of a revival which this scene of emotion held out was, ere long, blasted by speedy and deeper relapses into the guilt of defection and idolatry. **6-10. and when Joshua had let the people go**— This passage is a repetition of Joshua, 24. 29-31, and it was inserted here to put the reader in possession of the reasons which called forth so strong and severe a rebuke from the angel of the Lord. During the lifetime of the first occupiers, who retained a vivid recollection of all

the miracles and judgments which they had witnessed in Egypt and the desert, the national character stood high for faith and piety. But, in course of time, a new race arose who were strangers to all the hallowed and solemnizing experience of their fathers, and too readily yielded to the corrupting influences of the idolatry that surrounded them.

**11-19. WICKEDNESS OF THE NEW GENERATION AFTER JOSHUA.**  
**11-19. the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord**— This chapter, together with the first eight verses of the next, contains a brief but comprehensive summary of the principle developed in the following history; and an attentive consideration of them, therefore, is of the greatest importance to a right understanding of the strange and varying phrases of Israelitish history, from the death of Joshua till the establishment of the monarchy. **served Baalim**— The plural is used to include all the gods of the country. **13. Ashtaroth**— Also a plural word, denoting all the female divinities, whose rites were celebrated by the most gross and revolting impurities. **14. the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them**— Adversities in close and rapid succession befell them. But all these calamities were designed only as chastisements, a course of correctional discipline by which God brought His people to see and repent of their errors; for as they returned to faith and allegiance, he “raised up judges” (*v.* 16) **which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them**— The judges who governed Israel were strictly God’s vicegerents in the government of the people, He being the supreme ruler. Those who were thus elevated retained the dignity so long as they lived; but there was no regular, unbroken succession of judges. Individuals prompted by the inward, irresistible impulse of God’s Spirit, when they witnessed the depressed state of their country, were roused to achieve its deliverance. It was usually accompanied by a special call, and the people seeing them endowed with extraordinary courage or strength, accepted them as delegates of heaven, and submitted to their sway. Frequently they were appointed only for a particular district, and their authority extended no farther than over the people whose interests they were commissioned to protect. They were without pomp, equipage, or emoluments attached to the office. They had no power to make laws; for these were given by God, nor to explain them, for that was the province of the priests— but they were officially upholders of the law, defenders of religion, avenger of all crimes, particularly of idolatry and its attendant vices.

### CHAPTER III.

**1-4. NATIONS LEFT TO PROVE ISRAEL.** **1. These are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel**— This was the special design of these nations being left, and it evinces the direct influence of the Theocracy under which the Israelites were placed. These nations were left for a double purpose; in the first instance, to be instrumental, by their inroads, in promoting the moral and

spiritual discipline of the Israelites—and also to subserve the design of making them acquainted with war, in order that the young, more especially, who were total strangers to it, might learn the use of weapons, and the art of wielding them.

**5-7. BY COMMUNION WITH THESE, THE ISRAELITES COMMIT IDOLATRY.** 5-7. **The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites**—The two classes by degrees came to be on habits of intercourse; reciprocal alliances were formed by marriage, till the Israelites, relaxing the austerity of their principles, showed a growing conformity to the manners and worship of their idolatrous neighbours.

**8-II. OTHNIEL DELIVERS ISRAEL.** 8-II. **sold them**—*i. e.*, delivered them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, or Chushan, “the wicked.” This name had been probably given him from his cruel and impious character. **served Chushan-rishathaim eight years**—By the payment of a stipulated tribute yearly; the raising of which must have caused a great amount of labour and privation.

**9. when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord**—In their distress they had recourse to earnest prayer, accompanied by humble and penitent confession of their errors. **Othniel**—(See Joshua, 15. 17; chap. 1. 13). His military experience qualified him for the work, while the gallant exploits he was known to have performed, gained him the full confidence of his countrymen in his ability as a leader.

**10. The spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war**—Impelled by a supernatural influence, he undertook the difficult task of government at this national crisis—addressing himself to promote a general reformation of manners; the abolition of idolatry, the revival of pure religion, and then, after these preliminary measures, he collected a body of choice warriors to expel the foreign oppressors. **the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, and his hand prevailed against Chushan**—No details are given of this war, which, considering the resources of so potent a monarch, must have been a determined struggle. But the Israelitish arms were crowned through the blessing of God with victory, and Canaan regained its freedom and independence. **11. Othniel died.** How powerful the influence of one good man is, in church or state, is best found in his loss. [BISHOP HALL.]

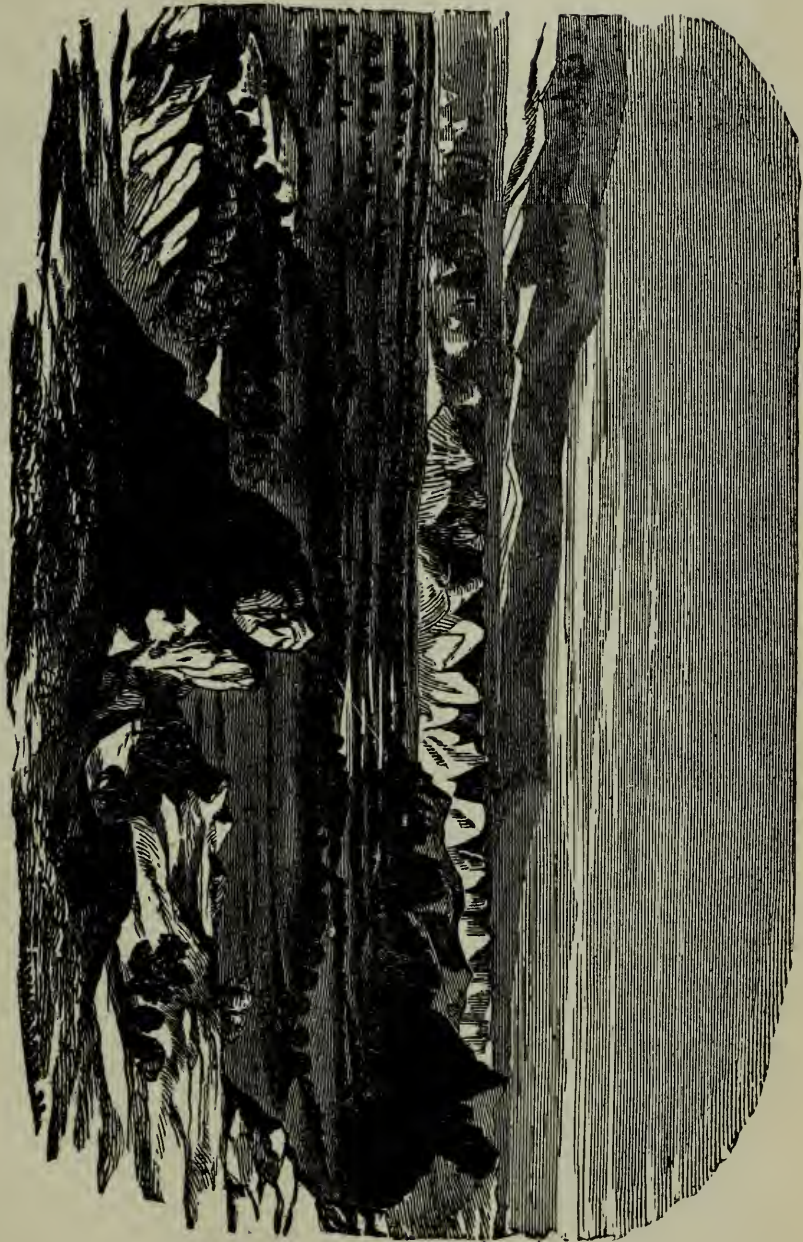
**12-30. EHUD FROM EGLON.** 12-14. **the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord**—The Israelites, deprived of the moral and political influence of Othniel, were not long in following their native bias to idolatry. **the Lord strengthened Eglon, king of Moab**—The reigning monarch's ambition was to recover that extensive portion of his ancient territory possessed by the Israelites. In conjunction with his neighbours (the Ammonites and Amalekites, sworn enemies of Israel), he first subjected the eastern tribes, then crossing the Jordan, made a sudden incursion on western Canaan, and, in virtue of his conquests, erected fortifications in the territory adjoining Jericho [JOSEPHUS], to secure the frontier, and fixed his residence there. This oppressor was permitted, in the providence of God, to triumph for eighteen years.

**15. Ehud, son of Gera**—*i. e.*, descended from Gera, one of Benja-

min's sons (Genesis, 46. 21). **left-handed**—This peculiarity distinguished many in the Benjamite tribe (ch. 20. 16). But the original word is rendered in some versions—"both-handed," a view countenanced by 1 Chronicles, 12. 2. **by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab**—that is, the yearly tribute, which, according to eastern fashion, would be borne with ostentatious ceremony, and offered (*v.* 18) by several messengers. 16. **Ehud made him a dagger, and he did gird it upon his right thigh**—The sword was usually worn on the left side; so that Ehud's was the more likely to escape detection. 19. **quarries**—Rather graven images (Deuteronomy, 7. 25; Jeremiah, 8. 19; 51. 52); statues of Moabite idols, the sight of which kindled the patriotic zeal of Ehud to avenge this public insult to Israel on its author. **I have a secret errand unto thee O king; who said, Keep silence**—"Privacy"—a signal for all to withdraw. 26. **a summer parlour**—*Heb.*, "chamber of cooling,"—one of those retired edifices which oriental grandees usually have in their gardens, and in which they repose during the heat of the day. **Ehud put forth his hand**—The whole circumstances of this daring act—the death of Eglon without a shriek or noise—the locking of the doors—the carrying off the key—the calm unhurried deportment of Ehud—shew the strength of his confidence that he was doing God service. 27. **he blew a trumpet in the mount of Ephraim**—Summoned to arms the people of that mountainous region, which, adjoining the territory of Benjamin, had probably suffered most from the grievous oppression of the Moabites. 28. **they went down after him, and took the fords**—(see Joshua, 2. 7) with the view of preventing all escape to the Moabite coast, and by the slaughter of 10,000 men, rescued his country from a state of ignominious vassalage. 31. **after him was Shamgar**—No notice is given of the tribe or family of this judge; and from the Philistines being the enemy that roused him into public service, the suffering seems to have been local—confined to some of the western tribes. **slew a hundred men with an ox-goad**—This implement is eight feet long, and about six inches in circumference. It is armed at the lesser end with a sharp prong for driving the cattle, and on the other with a small iron paddle for removing the clay which incumbers the plough in working. Such an instrument, wielded by a strong arm, would do no mean execution. We may suppose, however, for the notice is very fragmentary, that Shamgar was only the leader of a band of peasants, who, by means of such implements of labour as they could lay hold of at the moment, achieved this heroic exploit recorded.

## CHAPTER IV.

1-17. DEBORAH AND BARAK DELIVER ISRAEL FROM JABIN AND SISERA. 1. **The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead**—The removal of this zealous judge again left his infatuated countrymen without the restraint of religion. 2. **Jabin, king of Canaan**—Jabin, a royal title (Joshua, 11. 1).



Valley of the Jordan.



The second Jabin built a new capital on the ruins of the old (Joshua, II. 10, 11). The northern Canaanites had recovered from the effects of their disastrous overthrow in the time of Joshua, and triumphed in their turn over Israel. This was the severest oppression to which Israel had been subjected. But it fell heaviest on the tribes in the north, and it was not till after a grinding servitude of twenty years they were awakened to view it as the punishment of their sins, and to seek deliverance from God. 4. **Deborah, a prophetess** — A woman of extraordinary knowledge, wisdom, and piety, instructed in divine knowledge by the Spirit, and accustomed to interpret His will; who acquired an extensive influence, and was held in universal respect, insomuch that she became the animating spirit of the government, and discharged all the special duties of a judge, except that of military leader. 4. **wife of Lapidoth** — rendered by some “a woman of splendours.” 5. **she dwelt under the palm-tree** — Or, collectively, palm-grove. It is common still in the East to administer justice in the open air, or under the canopy of an umbrageous tree. 6. **she sent and called Barak** — By virtue of her official authority as judge. **Kedesh-naphtali** — Situated on an eminence, a little north of the Sea of Galilee, and so called to distinguish it from another Kedesh in Issachar. **hath not the Lord of Israel commanded** — A Hebrew form of making an emphatic communication. **go and draw toward Mount Tabor** — an isolated mountain of Galilee, north-east corner of the plain of Esdraelon. It was a convenient place of rendezvous, and the enlistment is not to be considered as limited to 10,000, though a smaller force would have been inadequate. 8. **Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go** — His somewhat singular request to be accompanied by Deborah was not altogether the result of weakness. The Orientals always take what is dearest to the battle-field along with them; they think it makes them fight better. The policy of Barak, then, to have the presence of the prophetess is perfectly intelligible, as it would no less stimulate the valour of the troops, than sanction, in the eyes of Israel, the uprising against an oppressor so powerful as Jabin. 9. **the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman** — This was a prediction which Barak could not understand at the time; but the strain of it conveyed a rebuke of his unmanly fears. 11. **now Heber the Kenite pitched his tent** — It is not uncommon, even in the present day, for pastoral tribes to feed their flocks on the extensive commons that lie in the heart of inhabited countries in the East (see ch. I. 16). **plain of Zaanaim** — This is a mistranslation for “the oaks of the wanderers.” The site of the encampment was under a grove of oaks, or terebinths, in the upland valley of Kedesh. 13. **the river of Kishon** — The plain on its bank was chosen as the battle-field by Sisera himself, who was unconsciously drawn thither for the ruin of his army. 14. **Barak went down from Mount Tabor** — It is a striking proof of the full confidence Barak and his troops reposed in Deborah’s assurance of victory, that they relinquished their advantageous position on the hill, and rushed into the plain in face of the iron chariots they so much dreaded. 15. **the Lord discomfited Sisera** — *Heb.*, threw his army into confusion,

men, horses, and chariots, being intermingled in wild confusion. The disorder was produced by a supernatural panic (see ch. 5. 20). **so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet**—His chariot being probably distinguished by its superior size and elegance, would betray the rank of its rider, and he saw therefore that his only chance of escape was on foot. 16. **but Barak pursued unto Harosheih**—broken and routed, the main body of Sisera's army fled northward, others were forced into the Kishon and drowned (see ch. 5. 21). 17, 18. **Sisera fled to the tent of Jael**—According to the usages of nomadic people, the duty of receiving the stranger in the shiek's absence devolves on his wife, and the moment the stranger is admitted into the tent, his claim to be defended or concealed from his pursuers is established. 19. **she gave him drink, and covered him**—Sisera reckoned on this as a pledge of his safety, especially in the tent of a friendly sheik; this pledge was the strongest that could be sought or obtained, after he had partaken of refreshments, and been introduced in the inner or woman's apartment. 20. **He said unto her, When any man doth inquire of thee, Is there any man here? thou shalt say, No**—The privacy of the harem, even in a tent, cannot be intruded on without express permission. 21. **then Jael took a nail of the tent**—Most probably one of the pins with which the tent ropes are fastened to the ground. Escape was almost impossible for Sisera. But the taking of his life by the hand of Jael was murder. It was a direct violation of all the notions of honour and friendship that are usually held sacred among pastoral people, and for which it is impossible to conceive a woman in Jael's circumstances to have had any motive, except that of gaining favour with the victors. Though predicted by Deborah, it was the result of divine foreknowledge only—not the divine appointment or sanction; and though it is praised in the song, the eulogy must be considered as pronounced not on the moral character of the woman and her deed, but on the public benefits which, in the overruling providence of God, would flow from it.

## CHAPTER V.

**1-31. DEBORAH AND BARAK'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING.** 1. **then sang Deborah and Barak on that day**—This noble triumphal ode was evidently the composition of Deborah herself. 2-3. The meaning is obscurely seen in our version; it has been better rendered thus, "Praise ye Jehovah; for the free are freed in Israel—the people have willingly offered themselves." [ROBINSON.] 4, 5. Allusion is here made, in general terms, to God's interposition on behalf of his people. **Seir and the field of Edom**—Represent the mountain-range and plain, extending along the south from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf. **thou went out**—Indicates the storm to have proceeded from the south or south-east. 6-8. The song proceeds in these verses to describe the sad condition of the country, the oppression of the people, and the origin of all the national distress in the people's apostacy from God. Idolatry was



the cause of foreign invasion, and internal inability to resist it. 9. Expresses gratitude to the respective leaders of the tribes which participated in the contest; but, above all, to God, who inspired both the patriotic disposition and the strength. **speak**—*i. e.*, join in this song of praise. **white asses**—Those which are purely white are highly prized, and, being costly, are possessed only by the wealthy and great. “Ye that sit in judgment,” has been rendered, “ye that repose on tapestries.” 11. The wells which are at a little distance from towns in the East, are, in unsettled times, places of danger. But in peace they are scenes of pleasant and joyous resort. The poetess anticipates that this song may be sung, and “the righteous acts of the Lord rehearsed,” at these now tranquil “places of drawing water.” Deborah now rouses herself to describe, in terms suitable to the occasion, the preparation and the contest, and calls in a flight of poetic enthusiasm on Barak to parade his prisoners in triumphal procession. Then follows a eulogistic enumeration of the tribes which raised the commanded levy, or volunteered their services—the soldiers of Ephraim who dwelt near the mount of the Amalekites, the small quota of Benjamin; “the governors,” valiant leaders “out of Machir,” the western Manasseh; and out of Zebulun, **the rod of the numberers**—those who made up and kept the muster-rolls; and the princes who, with impetuous alacrity, rushed on with Barak to the charge in the plain. Then comes a reproachful notice of the tribes which did not obey the summons to take the field against the common enemy of Israel. By the “divisions,” *i. e.*, the water-courses which descend from the eastern hills unto the Jordan and Dead Sea. **by the streams of Reuben great were the resolves**—They felt the patriotic impulse, and determined, at first, to join the ranks of their western brethren, but resiled from the purpose; preferring their peaceful shepherd songs to the trumpet sound of war. 17. **Gilead abode beyond Jordan**—*i. e.*, both Gad and the eastern half of Manasseh chose to dwell at east in their Havoth-jair, or villages of tents, while Dan and Asher, both maritime tribes, continued with their ships and in their “breaches” (havens). The mention of these craven tribes is concluded (*v.* 18) with a fresh burst of commendation on Zebulun and Naphtali. 19-22. describes the scene of battle, and the issue. It would seem (*v.* 19) that Jabin was reinforced by the troops of other Canaanite princes. The battle-field was near Taanach (now Ta’anuk), on a Tell or mound in the level plain of Megiddo (now Leijun), on its south-western extremity, by the left bank of the Kishon. **they took no gain of money**—they obtained no plunder. **the stars in their courses fought**—A fearful tempest burst upon them, and threw them into disorder. **the river of Kishon swept them away**—The enemy was defeated near “the waters of Megiddo”—the sources and side streams of the Kishon; they that fled had to cross the deep and marshy bed of the torrent, but the Lord had sent a heavy rain—the waters suddenly rose—the warriors fell into the quicksands, and sinking deep into them, were drowned or washed into the sea. [VAN DE VELDE.] 22. **Then were the horse hoofs broken by the means of the prancings**—

anciently, as in many parts of the East still, horses were not shod. The breaking of the hoofs denotes the hot haste and heavy irregular tramp of the routed foe. 23. **curse ye Meroz**—A village on the confines of Issachar and Naphtali, which lay in the course of the fugitives, but the inhabitants declined to aid in their destruction. 24-27. Is a most graphic picture of the treatment of Sisera in the tent of Jael. **butter**—curdled milk; a favorite beverage in the East. 28-30. In these verses a sudden transition is made to the mother of the Canaanite General, and a striking picture is drawn of a mind agitated between hope and fear—impatient of delay, yet anticipating the news of victory, and the rewards of rich booty. **the lattice**—A lattice window—common to the houses in warm countries for the circulation of air. **her wise ladies**—maids of honour. **to every man a damsel or two**—Young maidens formed always a valued part of oriental conquerors' war-spoils. But Sisera's mother wished other booty for him; namely, the gold-threaded, richly embroidered, and scarlet-coloured cloaks which were held in such high esteem. The ode concludes with a wish in unison with the pious and patriotic character of the prophetic.

## CHAPTER VI.

1-6. THE ISRAELITES, FOR THEIR SINS, OPPRESSED BY MIDIAN. 1. **the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian**—Untaught by their former experiences, the Israelites again apostatized, and new sins were followed by fresh judgments. Midian had sustained a severe blow in the time of Moses (Numbers, 31. 1-18), and the memory of that disaster, no doubt, inflamed their resentment against the Israelites. They were wandering herdsmen, called "children of the East," from their occupying the territory east of the Red Sea, contiguous to Moab; and the destructive ravages they are described as at this time committing in the land of Israel, are similar to those of the Bedouin Arabs, who harass the peaceful cultivators of the soil, and, unless composition is made with them, return annually at a certain season, when they carry off the grain, seize the cattle, and other property, and even life itself is in jeopardy from the attacks of those prowling marauders. The vast horde of Midianites that overran Canaan made them the greatest scourge which ever had afflicted the Israelites. **made dens in the mountains, and caves**—Not, of course, excavating them, for they were there already, but making them fit for habitation.

7-10. A PROPHET REBUKES THEM. **then the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel**—The cause of the national calamity is authoritatively traced to their infidelity as the cause.

11-16. AN ANGEL SENDS GIDEON TO DELIVER THEM. **there came an angel of the Lord**—He appeared in the character and equipments of a traveler (*v.* 21), who sat down in the shade to enjoy a little refreshment and repose, and entering into conversation on the engrossing topic of the times, the grievous oppression of the Midianites, began urging Gideon to exert his well-known prowess on behalf of his country. Gideon, in replying, addresses

him at first in a style equivalent (in *Heb.*) to "sir," but afterward gives to him the name usually applied to God. **an oak**—*Heb.*, the oak—as famous in after-times. **Ophrah**—A city in the tribe of Manasseh, about sixteen miles north from Jericho, in the district belonging to the family of Abiezer (Joshua, 17. 2). **his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press**—This incident tells emphatically the tale of public distress. The small quantity of grain he was thrashing indicated by his using a flail instead of the customary treading of cattle—the unusual place—near a wine-press, under a tree, and on the bare ground, not a wooden floor, for the prevention of noise—all these circumstances reveal the extreme dread in which the people were living. **13. if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?**—Gideon's language betrays want of reflection, for the very chastisements God had brought on his people showed his presence with and his interest in them. **14. The Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy strength: have not I sent thee?**—The command and the promise made Gideon aware of the real character of his visitor, and yet like Moses, from a sense of humility, or a shrinking at the magnitude of the undertaking, he excused himself from entering on the enterprise. And even though assured that, with the divine aid, he would overcome the Midianites as easily as if they were but one man, he still hesitates and wishes to be better assured that the mission was really from God. He resembles Moses also in the desire for a sign; and in both cases, it was the rarity of revelations in such periods of general corruption, that made them so desirous of having the fullest conviction of being addressed by a heavenly messenger. The request was reasonable, and it was graciously granted.

**17-23. GIDEON'S PRESENT CONSUMED BY FIRE.** **18. depart not hence, I pray thee, until I bring my present**—*Heb.*, my *mincha*, or meat offering; and his idea probably was to prove, by his visitor's partaking of the entertainment, whether or not he was more than man. **19. Gideon went in and made ready a kid; the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot**—(see Genesis, 18.) The flesh seems to have been roasted, which is done by cutting it into kobab, *i. e.*, into small pieces, fixed on a skewer, and put before the fire. The broth was for immediate use; the other, brought in a handbasket, was intended to be a future supply to the traveler. The miraculous fire that consumed it, and the vanishing of the stranger, not by walking, but as a spirit in the fire, filled Gideon with awe. A consciousness of demerit fills the heart of every fallen man at the thought of God, with fear of his wrath; and this feeling was increased by a belief, prevalent in ancient times, that whoever saw an angel would forthwith die. The acceptance of Gideon's sacrifice betokened the acceptance of his person; but it required an express assurance of the divine blessing, given in some unknown manner, to restore his comfort and peace of mind. **24-32. it came to pass the same night, the Lord said unto him**—The transaction in which Gideon is here described as engaged was not entered on till the night after the vision. **Take thy father's second bullock**—The Midianites had probably reduced the family herd; or, as Gideon's father was addicted to idolatry,

the best may have been fattened for the service of Baal ; so that the second was the only remaining one fit for sacrifice to God. **throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath**—Standing upon his ground, though kept for the common use of the townsmen. **cut down the grove that is by it**—Dedicated to Ashtaroth. With the aid of ten confidential servants he demolished the one altar, and raised on the appointed spot the altar of the Lord ; but for fear of opposition, the work had to be done under cover of night. A violent commotion was excited next day, and vengeance vowed against Gideon as the perpetrator. "Joash, his father, quieted the mob in a manner similar to that of the town-clerk of Ephesus. It was not for them to take the matter into their own hands. The one, however, made an appeal to the magistrate ; the other to the idolatrous god himself." [CHALMERS.]

**33-39. THE SIGNS.** 33. **all the Midianites pitched in Jezreel**—The confederated troops of Midian, Amalek, and their neighbours, crossing the Jordan to make a fresh inroad on Canaan, and encamped in the plains of Esdraelon (anciently Jezreel). The southern part of the Ghor lies in a very low level, so that there is a steep and difficult descent into Canaan by the southern wadys. Keeping this in view, we see the reason why the Midianite army, from the east of Jordan, entered Canaan by the northern wadys of the Ghor, opposite Jezreel. 34. **the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon**—Called in this sudden emergency into the public service of his country, he was supernaturally endowed with wisdom and energy commensurate with the magnitude of the danger and the difficulties of his position. His war summons was enthusiastically obeyed by all the neighbouring tribes. On the eve of a perilous enterprise, he sought to fortify his mind with a fresh assurance of a divine call to the responsible office. The miracle of the fleece was a very remarkable one—especially, considering the copious dews that fall in his country. The divine patience and condescension were wonderfully manifested in reversing the form of the miracle. Gideon, himself, seems to have been conscious of incurring the displeasure of God by his hesitancy and doubts—but He bears with the infirmities of his people.

## CHAPTER VII.

**1-8. GIDEON'S ARMY.** 1. **Jerubbaal**—This had now become Gideon's honourable surname, "the enemy of Baal." well, rather "spring of Harod," *i. e.*, "fear, trembling,"—probably the same as the fountain in Jezreel (1 Samuel, 29. 1). It was situated not far from Gilboa, on the confines of Manasseh, and the name "Harod," was bestowed on it with evident reference to the panic which seized the majority of Gideon's troops. The host of the Midianites were on the northern side of the valley, seemingly deeper down in the descent toward the Jordan, near a little eminence. 2. **the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are too many**—Although the Israelitish army mustered only 32,000—or one-sixth of the Midianitish host—the number was too great, for it was the Lord's purpose to

teach Israel a memorable lesson of dependence on Him. 3. **Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful, let him return**—This proclamation was in terms of an established law (Deuteronomy, 20. 8). **too many**—Two reductions were ordered, the last by the application of a test which was made known to Gideon alone. **bring them down to the water**—The wandering people in Asia when, on a journey, or in haste, they come to water, do not stoop down with deliberation on their knees, but only bend forward as much as is necessary to bring their hand in contact with the stream, and throw it up with rapidity, and at the same time such address, that they do not drop a particle. The Israelites, it seems, were acquainted with the practice; and those who adopted it on this occasion were selected as fit for a work that required expedition; the rest were dismissed according to the divine direction. 7. **the Lord said, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you**—It is scarcely possible to conceive a severer trial than the command to attack the overwhelming forces of the enemy, with such a handful of followers. But Gideon's faith in the divine assurance of victory was steadfast, and it is for this he is so highly commended (Hebrews, 11. 32). 8. **the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley**—Attention to the relative position of the parties is of the greatest importance to an understanding of what follows.

9-15. HE IS ENCOURAGED BY THE DREAM AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BARLEY CAKE. 9. **arise, get thee down unto the host....but if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant**—In ancient times it was reckoned no degradation for persons of the highest rank and character to act as spies on an enemy's camp; and so Gideon did on this occasion. But the secret errand was directed by God, who intended that he should hear something which might animate his own and the valour of his troops. 11. **the outside of the armed men that were in the host**—"Armed," means embodied under the five officers established by the ordinary laws and usages of encampments. The camp seems to have been unprotected by any rampart, since Gideon had no difficulty in reaching and overhearing a conversation that was passing in one of them. 12. **The Midianites and the Amalekites lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitudes; and their camels without number**—A most graphic description of an Arab encampment. They lay wrapt in sleep, or resting from their day's plunder, while their innumerable camels were stretched around them. 13. **I dreamed a dream; and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian**—This was a characteristic and very expressive dream for an Arab in the circumstances. The rolling down the hill, striking against the tents, and overturning them, naturally enough connected it in his mind with the position and meditated attack of the Israelitish leader. The circumstance of the cake, too, was very significant. Barley was usually the food of the poor, and of beasts; but most probably, from the widespread destruction of the crops by the invaders, multitudes must have been reduced to poor and scanty fare. 15. **when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation,**

**he worshipped**—The incident originated in the secret overruling providence of God, and Gideon, from his expression of pious gratitude, regarded it as such. On his mind, as well as that of his followers, it produced the intended effect—that of imparting new animation and impulse to their patriotism.

**16-23. HIS STRATAGEM AGAINST MIDIAN. 16. he divided the three hundred men into three companies**—The object of dividing his forces was, that they might seem to be surrounding the enemy. The pitchers were emptied to conceal the torches, and made of earthenware, so as to be easily broken; and the sudden blaze of the held-up lights—the loud echo of the trumpets, and the shouts of Israel, always terrible (Numbers, 23. 21), and now more terrible than ever by the use of such striking words, broke through the stillness of the midnight air; the sleepers started from their rest; not a blow was dealt by the Israelites; but the enemy ran tumultuously, uttering the wild, discordant cries peculiar to the Arab race. They fought indiscriminately, not knowing friend from foe; the panic being universal, they soon precipitately fled, directing their flight down to the Jordan, by the foot of the mountains of Ephraim, to places known as the “house of the acacia,” and “the meadow of the dance.” **23. the men of Israel gathered themselves together**—These were evidently the parties dismissed, who having lingered at a little distance from the scene of contest, now eagerly joined in the pursuit south-westward through the valley. **24. Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim**—The Ephraimites lay on the south, and could render seasonable aid. **come, take before them the waters unto Beth-barah** (See ch. 3. 28.)—these were the northern fords of the Jordan, to the east-north-east of wady Maleh. **the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together unto Beth-barah**—A new conflict ensued, in which two secondary chiefs were seized, and slain on the spots where they were respectively taken. The spots were named after these chiefs, Oreb, “the Raven,” and Zeeb. “the Wolf”—appropriate designations of Arab leaders.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1-9. THE EPHRAIMITES OFFENDED, BUT PACIFIED. 1. the men of Ephraim said, Why has thou served us thus?**—Where this complaint was made—whether before or after the crossing of the Jordan, cannot be determined. By the overthrow of the national enemy, the Ephraimites were benefited as largely as any of the other neighbouring tribes. But, piqued at not having been sharers in the glory of the victory, their leading men could not repress their wounded pride; and the occasion only served to bring out an old and deeply-seated feeling of jealous rivalry that subsisted between the tribes (Isaiah, 9. 21). The discontent was groundless, for Gideon acted according to divine directions—and, besides, as their tribe was conterminous with that of Gideon. they might, had they been really fired with the flame of patriotic zeal, have volunteered their services in a movement against the

common enemy. 2. 3. **he said, What have I done now in comparison of you?**—His mild and truly modest answer breathes the spirit of a great as well as good man, who was calm, collected and self-possessed in the midst of most exciting scenes. It succeeded in throwing oil on the troubled waters (Proverbs, 16. 1), and no wonder, for, in the height of generous self-denial, it ascribes to his querulous brethren a greater share of merit and glory than belonged to himself (1 Corinthians, 13. 4; Philemon, 2. 3). 4. **Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over**—Much exhausted, but eager to continue the pursuit till the victory was consummated. 5. **he said unto the men of Succoth**—*i. e.*, a place of tents or booths. The name seems to have been applied to the whole part of the Jordan valley on the west, as well as the east side of the river, all belonging to the tribe of Gad (Cf. Genesis 33. 17; 1 Kings, 7. 46; with Joshua, 13. 27). Being engaged in the common cause of all Israel, he had a right to expect support and encouragement from his countrymen everywhere. 6. **the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand**—An insolent as well as a time-serving reply. It was insolent, because it implied a bitter taunt that Gideon was counting with confidence on a victory which they believed he would not gain; and it was time-serving, because living in the near neighbourhood of the Midionite sheiks, they dreaded the future vengeance of those roving chiefs. This contumelious manner of acting was heartless and disgraceful in people who were of Israelitish blood. 7. **I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briers**—A cruel torture, to which captives were often subjected in ancient times—by having thorns and briers placed on their naked bodies, and pressed down by sledges, or heavy implements of husbandry being dragged over them. 8. **he went to Penuel, and spake to them likewise**—A neighbouring city, situated also in the territory of Gad, near the Jabbok, and honoured with this name by Jacob (Genesis, 32. 30, 31). 9. **he said, When I come again I will break down this tower**—Intent on the pursuit, and afraid of losing time, he postponed the merited vengeance till his return. His confident anticipation of a triumphant return evinces the strength of his faith, and his specific threat was probably provoked by some proud and presumptuous boast, that in their lofty watch-tower the Penuelites would set him at defiance,

10-27. ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA TAKEN. 10. **Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor**—A town on the eastern confines of Gad. The wreck of the Midianite army halted there. 11. **Gideon went up by the way of them that dwell in tents on the East**—He tracked the fugitives across the mountain-range of Gilead to the north-east of the Jabbok, and there came upon them unexpectedly, while they were resting secure among their own nomadic tribes. Jogbehah is supposed to be Ramothgilead; and, therefore, the Midianites must have found refuge at or near Abela, "Abel-Cheramim," the plain of the vineyards. 12. **When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them**—A third conflict took place. His arrival at their last quarters, which was by an unwonted path, took the fugitives by surprise, and the conquest was there com-

pleted of the Midianite horde. 13. **Gideon returned from battle before the sun was up**—He seems to have returned by a nearer route to Succoth, for what is rendered in our version “before the sun was up,” means “the heights of Heres, the sun-hills.” 14. **he described**—Wrote the names of the seventy princes or elders. It was from them he had received so inhospitable a treatment. 16. **he took the thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth**—By refusing his soldiers refreshments, they had committed a public crime, as well as an act of inhumanity, and were subjected to a horrible punishment, which the great abundance and remarkable size of the thorn bushes, together with the thinness of clothing in the East, has probably suggested. 18. **then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?**—This was one of the countless atrocities which the Midianite chiefs had perpetrated during their seven years’ lawless occupancy. It is noticed now for the first time, when their fate was about to be determined. **each one resembled the children of a king**—An orientalism for great beauty, majesty of appearance, uncommon strength, and grandeur of form. 19. **they were my brethren, even the sons of my mother**—That is, uterine brothers; but in all countries where polygamy prevails, “the son of my mother” implies a closeness of relationship, and a warmth of affection never awakened by the looser term, “brother.” 20. **he said unto Jether his first-born, Up, and slay them**—The nearest of kin was the blood avenger; but a magistrate might order any one to do the work of the executioner, and the person selected was always of a rank equal or proportioned to that of the party doomed to suffer (1 Kings, 2. 29). Gideon intended, then, by the order to Jether, to put an honor on his son, by employing him to slay two enemies of his country; and, on the youth declining, performed the bloody deed himself. 22, 23. **The men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us . . . Gideon said unto them, The Lord shall rule over you**—Their unbounded admiration and gratitude prompted them, in the enthusiasm of the moment, to raise their deliverer to a throne, and to establish a royal dynasty in his house. But Gideon knew too well, and revered too piously the principles of the theocracy to entertain the proposal for a moment. Personal and family ambition was cheerfully sacrificed to a sense of duty, and every worldly motive was kept in check by a supreme regard to the divine honour. He would willingly act as judge; but the Lord alone was King of Israel. 24-27. **Gideon said, I would desire a request of you**—This was the contribution of an ear-ring [*Sing.*], for, as the ancient Arabians (Ishmaelites and Midianites being synonymous terms, Genesis, 37. 25, 28) were gorgeously adorned with barbaric pearl and gold, an immense amount of such valuable booty had fallen into the hands of the Israelitish soldiers. The contribution was liberally made, and the quantity of gold given to him is estimated at £3,113 sterling. **ornaments**—Crescent-like plates of gold suspended from the necks, or placed on the breasts of the camels. **collars**—Rather ear-rings, or drops of gold or pearls. **purple**—A royal colour. The ancient as well as modern Arab-



adorned the necks, breasts and legs of their riding animals with sumptuous housing. 27. **Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, Ophrah** — That no idolatrous use was in view, nor any divisive course from Shiloh contemplated, is manifest from *v.* 33. Gideon proposed, with the gold he received, to make an ephod for his use *only* as a civil magistrate or ruler, as David did (1 Chronicles, 15. 27), and a magnificent pectoral or breast-plate also. It would seem, from the history, that he was not blameable in making this ephod, &c., as a civil robe or ornament merely, but that it *afterward* became an object to which religious ideas were attached; whereby it proved a snare, and consequently an evil, by *perversion* to Gideon and his house. [TAYLOR'S FRAGMENT.]

28. MIDIAN SUBDUED. **Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel** — This invasion of the Arab hordes into Canaan was as alarming and desolating as the irruption of the Huns into Europe. It was the severest scourge ever inflicted upon Israel; and both it and the deliverance under Gideon lived for centuries in the minds of the people (Psalm 83. 11).

## CHAPTER IX.

1-6. ABIMELECH IS MADE KING BY THE SHECHEMITES. 1. **Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem** — The idolatry which had been stealthily creeping into Israel during the latter years of Gideon, was now openly professed; Shechem was wholly inhabited by its adherents; at least idolators had the ascendancy. Abimelech, one of Gideon's numerous sons, was connected with that place — was ambitious of sovereign power, and having plied successfully the arts of a demagogue with his maternal relatives and friends, he acquired both the influence and money by which he raised himself to a throne. **communed with all the family of the house of his mother's father** — Here is a striking instance of the evils of polygamy — one son has connections and interests totally alien to those of his brothers. 2. **whether is better for you that all the sons of Jerubbaal, or one should reign over you** — A false insinuation artfully contrived to stir up jealousy and alarm. Gideon had rejected, with abhorrence, the proposal to make himself or any of his family king, and there is no evidence that any of his other sons coveted the title. 4. **the house of Baal-berith** — Either the temple, or the place where this idol was worshipped: Baal-berith, "god of the covenant," by invocation of whom the league of cities was formed. **Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him** — Idle, worthless vagabonds, the scum of society, who had nothing to lose, but much to gain from the success of a revolutionary movement. 5. **went unto Ophrah, and slew his brethren on one stone** — This is the first mention of a barbarous atrocity which has, with appalling frequency, been perpetrated in the despotic countries of the East — that of some one son of the deceased monarch usurping the throne, and hastening to confirm himself in the possession by the massacre of the natural or legitimate competitors. Abimelech slew his brethren *on one stone*, either

by dashing them from one rock, or sacrificing them on one stone altar, in revenge for the demolition of Baal's altar by their father. This latter view is the more probable, from the Shechemites (*v.* 24) aiding in it. **threescore and ten persons**—A round number is used, but it is evident that two are wanting to complete that amount. **all the men of Shechem, and all the house of Millo**—*i. e.*, a mound or rampart, so that the meaning is, all the men in the house or temple: namely, the priests of Baal. **made Abimelech king by the plain of the pillar**—Rather, by the oak near a raised mound—so that the ceremony of coronation might be conspicuous to a crowd.

**7-21. JOTHAM BY A PARABLE REPROACHETH THEM. 7. He stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice**—The spot he chose was, like the house-tops, the public place of Shechem; and the parable drawn from the rivalry of the various trees was appropriate to the diversified foliage of the valley below. Eastern people are exceedingly fond of parables, and use them for conveying reproofs—which they could not give in any other way. The top of Gerizim is not so high in the rear of the town, as it is nearer to the plain. With a little exertion of voice, he could easily have been heard by the people of the city; for the hill so overhangs the valley, that a person from the side or summit would have no difficulty in speaking to listeners at the base. Modern history records a case, in which soldiers on the hill shouted to the people in the city, and endeavoured to instigate them to an insurrection. There is something about the elastic atmosphere of an eastern clime, which causes it to transmit sound with wonderful celerity and distinctness. [HACKETT.] **13. wine which cheereth God and man**—Not certainly in the same manner. God might be said to be "cheered" by it, when the sacrifices were accepted, as he is said also to be honoured by oil (*v.* 9). **21. Jotham went to Beer**—The modern village El-Bireh, on the ridge which bounds the northern prospect of Jerusalem.

**22-49. GAAL'S CONSPIRACY. 22. when Abimelech had reigned three years**—His reign did not, probably, at first, extend beyond Shechem; but by stealthy and progressive encroachments he subjected some of the neighbouring towns to his sway. None could "reign" in Israel, except by rebellious usurpation; and hence the reign of Abimelech is expressed in the original, by a word signifying "despotism," not that which describes the mild and divinely authorized rule of the judge. **23. then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem**—*i. e.*, in the course of providence, jealousy, distrust, secret disaffection and smothered rebellion appeared among his subjects disappointed and disgusted with his tyranny; and God permitted those disorders to punish the complicated crimes of the royal fratricide and idolatrous usurper. **26. Gaal came with his brethren and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.**—An insurrection of the original Canaanites, headed by this man, at last broke out in Shechem. **28-45. would to God this people were under my hand**—He seems to have been a boastful, impudent and cowardly person, totally unfit to be a leader in a revolutionary crisis. The conse-

quence was, that he allowed himself to be drawn into an ambush — was defeated — the city of Shechem destroyed and strewn with salt — and the people took refuge in the stronghold, which was set fire to, and all in it perished.

**50-57. ABIMELECH SLAIN.** 50. **Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against it** — Now Tubas — not far from Shechem. 51. **all the men and women gat to the top of the tower** — The Canaanite forts were generally mountain-fastnesses or keeps, and they often had a strong tower which served as a last refuge. The Assyrian bas-reliefs afford counterparts of the scene here described, so vivid and exact that we might almost suppose them to be representations of the same historic events. The besieged city — the strong tower within — the men and *women* crowding its battlements — the fire applied to the doors, and even the huge fragments of stone dropping from the hands of one of the garrison on the heads of the assailants — are all well represented to the life — just as they are here described in the narrative of inspired truth [Goss.]

## CHAPTER X.

**1-5. TOLA JUDGETH ISRAEL IN SHAMIR,** 1. **after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel, Tola** — *i. e.*, to save. Deliverance was necessary as well from intestine usurpation as from foreign aggression. **the son of Puah** — He was uncle to Abimelech by the father's side, and consequently brother of Gideon; yet the former was of the tribe of Issachar, while the latter was of Manasseh. They were, most probably, uterine brothers. **dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim** — As a central place, he made it the seat of government. 3. **Jair, a Gileadite** — This judge was a different person from the conqueror of that north-eastern territory, and founder of Havoth-jair, or "Jair's villages" (Numbers, 32. 41; Deuteronomy, 3. 14; Joshua, 13. 3; 1 Chronicles, 2. 22). 4. **he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts** — This is a characteristic trait of eastern manners in those early times; and the grant of a village to each of his 30 sons was a striking proof of his extensive possessions. His having thirty sons is no conclusive evidence that he had more than one wife; much less that he had more than one at a time. There are instances, in this country, of men having as many children by two successive wives.

**6-9. ISRAEL OPPRESSED BY THE PHILISTINES AND AMMONITES.** 6. **the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord** — This apostacy seems to have exceeded every former one in the grossness and universality of the idolatry practiced. 7. **Philistines and the children of Ammon** — The predatory incursions of these two hostile neighbours were made naturally on the parts of the land respectively contiguous to them. But the Ammonites, animated with the spirit of conquest, carried their arms across the Jordan; so that the central and southern provinces of Canaan were extensively desolated.

**10-15. THEY CRY TO GOD.** 10. **The children of Israel cried unto the Lord, We have sinned against thee** — The first step of

repentance is confession of sin, and the best proof of its sincerity is given by the transgressor, when he mourns not only over the painful consequences which have resulted from his offenses to himself, but over the heinous evil committed against God. II. **the Lord said, Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians**—The circumstance recorded in this and the following verses were most probably made through the High Priest, whose duty it was to interpret the will of God. 12. **Maonites**—*i. e.*, Midianites.

16-18. **THEY REPENT; GOD PITIETH THEM.** 16. **They put away the strange gods...and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel**—On their abandonment of idolatry and return to purity of worship, God graciously abridged the term of national affliction, and restored times of peace. 17, 18. **the children of Ammon were gathered together**—From carrying on a guerilla warfare, the Ammonites proceeded to a continued campaign; their settled aim being to wrest the whole of the trans-Jordanic territory from their actual occupiers. In this great crisis a general meeting of the Israelitish tribes was held at Mizpeh. This Mizpeh was in eastern Manasseh (Joshua, II. 3).

## CHAPTER XI.

1-3. **JEPHTHAH.** 1. **Jephthah**—"opener." son of an harlot—A concubine, or foreigner; implying an inferior sort of marriage prevalent in Eastern countries. Whatever dishonour might attach to his birth, his own high and energetic character rendered him early a person of note. **Gilead begat Jephthah**—His father seems to have belonged to the tribe of Manasseh (1 Chronicle, 7. 14, 17). 2. **thou shalt not inherit in our father's house**—As there were children by the legitimate wife, the son of the secondary one was not entitled to any share of the patrimony, and the prior claim of the others was indisputable. Hence, as the brothers of Jephthah seem to have resorted to rude and violent treatment, they must have been influenced by some secret ill-will. 3. **Jephthah dwelt in the land of Tob**—On the north of Gilead, beyond the frontier of the Hebrew territories (2 Samuel, 10. 6, 8). **there were gathered vain men to Jephthah**—Idle, daring or desperate. **and went out with him**—Followed him as a military chief. They led a free-pooting life, sustaining themselves by frequent incursions on the Ammonites and other neighbouring people, in the style of Robin Hood, or Highland reivers in the border forays, even when England and Scotland were at peace. The same kind of life is led by many an Arab or Tartar still, who, as the leader of a band, acquires fame by his stirring or gallant adventures, and it is not deemed dishonourable when the expeditions are directed against those out of his own tribe or nation. Jephthah's mode of life was similar to that of David when driven from the court of Saul.

4-11. **THE GILEADITES COVENANT WITH JEPHTHAH.** 4. **in process of time**—On the return of the season. **the children of Ammon made war against Israel**—Having prepared the way by the introduction of Jephthah, the sacred historian here resumes

the thread of his narrative from ch. 10. 17. The Ammonites seem to have invaded the country, and active hostilities were inevitable. 5, 6. **the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah**—All eyes were directed toward him as the only person possessed of the qualities requisite for the preservation of the country in this time of imminent danger; and a deputation of the chief men was despatched from the Hebrew camp at Mizpeh to solicit his services. 7-9. **Jephthah said, Did not ye hate me?**—He gave them at first a haughty and cold reception. It is probable that he saw some of his brothers among the deputies. Jephthah was now in circumstances to make his own terms. With his former experience—he would have shown little wisdom or prudence without binding them to a clear and specific engagement to invest him with unlimited authority, the more especially as he was about to imperil his life in their cause. Although ambition might, to a certain degree, have stimulated his ready compliance, it is impossible to overlook the piety of his language, which creates a favourable impression that his roving life, in a state of social manners so different from ours, was not incompatible with habits of personal religion. 10, 11. **The elders of Israel said unto Jephthah, The Lord be witness between us**—Their offer being accompanied by the most solemn oath, Jephthah intimated his acceptance of the mission, and his willingness to accompany them. But to make “assurance doubly sure,” he took care that the pledge given by the deputies in Tob should be ratified in a general assembly of the people at Mizpeh—and the language of the historian, “Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord,” seems to imply that his inauguration with the character and extraordinary office of judge was solemnized by prayer for the divine blessing, or some religious ceremonial.

12-28. HIS EMBASSY TO THE KING OF AMMON. 12-28. **Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon**—This first act in his judicial capacity reflects the highest credit on his character for prudence and moderation, justice and humanity. The bravest officers have always been averse to war; so Jephthah, whose courage was indisputable, resolved not only to make it clearly appear that hostilities were forced upon him, but to try measures for avoiding, if possible, an appeal to arms: and in pursuing such a course he was acting as became a leader in Israel (Deuteronomy, 20. 10-18). 13. **the king of Ammon answered, Because Israel took away my land**—(see Deuteronomy, 2. 19-37). The subject of quarrel was a claim of right advanced by the Ammonite monarch to the lands which the Israelites were occupying. Jephthah's reply was clear, decided, and unanswerable:—first, those lands were not in possession of the Ammonites when his countrymen got them, and that they had been acquired by right of conquest from the Amorites; secondly, that the Israelites had now, by a lapse of 300 years of undisputed possession, established a prescriptive right to the occupation; and, thirdly, having received a grant of them from the Lord, his people were entitled to maintain their right on the same principle that guided the Ammonites in receiving, from their god Chemosh, the territory they now occupied. This diplomatic statement, so admirable for

the clearness and force of its arguments, concluded with a solemn appeal to God to maintain, by the issue of events, the cause of right and justice. 28. **Howbeit the king of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah**—His remonstrances to the aggressor were disregarded, and, war being inevitable, preparations were made for a determined resistance.

29-31. **HIS VOW.** 29. **then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah**—The calm wisdom, sagacious forethought and indomitable energy which he was enabled to display, was a pledge to himself and a convincing evidence to his countrymen, that he was qualified by higher resources than his own for the momentous duties of his office. **he passed over Gilead and Manasseh**—The provinces most exposed and in danger, for the purpose of levying troops, and exciting by his presence a wide-spread interest in the national cause. Returning to the camp at Mizpeh, he thence began his march against the enemy, and there he made his celebrated vow, in accordance with an ancient custom for generals at the outbreak of a war, or on the eve of a battle, to promise the god of their worship a costly oblation, or dedication of some valuable booty, in the event of victory. Vows were in common practice also among the Israelites. They were encouraged by the divine approval as emanating from a spirit of piety and gratitude: and rules laid down in the law for regulating the performance. But it is difficult to bring Jephthah's vow within the legitimate range (see Leviticus, 27. 28). 31. **whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me**—This evidently points not to an animal, for that might have been a dog; which, being unclean, was unfit to be offered; but to a person, and it looks extremely like as if he, from the first, contemplated a human sacrifice. Bred up as he had been, beyond the Jordan, where the Israelitish tribes, far from the tabernacle, were looser in their religious sentiments; and living latterly on the borders of a heathen country where such sacrifices were common, it is not improbable that he may have been so ignorant as to imagine that a similar immolation would be acceptable to God. His mind, engrossed with the prospect of a contest, on the issue of which the fate of his country depended, might, through the influence of superstition, consider the dedication of the object dearest to him the most likely to insure success. **shall surely be the Lord's; and (or) I will offer it up for a burnt-offering**—The adoption of the latter particle, which many interpreters suggest, introduces the important alternative, that if it were a person, the dedication would be made to the service of the sanctuary; if a proper animal or thing, it would be offered on the altar.

32, 33. **HE OVERCOMES THE AMMONITES.** 32. **Jephthah passed over to the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into his hand**—He met and engaged them at Aroer, a town in the tribe of Gad, upon the Arnon. A decisive victory crowned the arms of Israel, and the pursuit was continued to Abel (plain of the vineyards), from south to north, over an extent of about sixty miles. 34. **Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances**—

The return of the victors was hailed, as usual, by the joyous acclaim of a female band (1 Samuel, 18. 6), the leader of whom was Jephthah's daughter. The vow was full in his mind, and it is evident that it had not been communicated to any one, otherwise precautions would doubtless have been taken to place another object at his door. The shriek, and other accompaniments of irrepressible grief, seem to indicate that her life was to be forfeited as a sacrifice; the nature of the sacrifice (which was abhorrent to the character of God), and distance from the tabernacle does not suffice to overturn this view, which the language and whole strain of the narrative plainly support; and although the lapse of two months might be supposed to have afforded time for reflection, and a better sense of his duty, there is but too much reason to conclude that he was impelled to the fulfilment by the dictates of a pious but unenlightened conscience.

## CHAPTER XII.

**1-3. THE EPHRAIMITES QUARRELING WITH JEPHTHAH. 1. The men of Ephraim gathered themselves together** — *Heb.*, were summoned, and went northward — after crossing the Jordan, their route from Ephraim was, strictly speaking, in a north-easterly direction toward Mizpeh. **they said unto Jephthah, Wherefore didst thou not call us** — This is a fresh development of the jealous, rash, and irritable temper of the Ephraimites. The ground of their offense now was their desire of enjoying the credit of patriotism, although they had not shared in the glory of victory. **2. when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands** — The straightforward answer of Jephthah shows that their charge was false; their complaint of not being treated as confederates and allies entirely without foundation; and their boast of a ready contribution of their services came with an ill grace from people who had purposely delayed appearing till the crisis was past. **3. when I saw that ye delivered me not, I put my life in my hands** — A common form of speech in the East for undertaking a duty of imminent peril. This Jephthah had done, having encountered and routed the Ammonites with the aid of his Gileadite volunteers alone; and since the Lord had enabled him to conquer without requiring assistance from any other tribe, why should the Ephraimites take offense? They ought rather to have been delighted, and thankful that the war had terminated without their incurring any labour and danger.

**4-15. DISCERNED BY THE WORD SIBBOLETH, ARE SLAIN BY THE GILEADITES. 4. the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim** — The remonstrances of Jephthah, though reasonable and temperate, were not only ineffectual, but followed by insulting sneers that the Gileadites were reckoned both by the western Manassites and Ephraimites as outcasts — the scum and refuse of their common stock. This was addressed to a peculiarly sensitive people. A feud immediately ensued. The Gileadites, determined to chastise this

public affront, gave them battle ; and having defeated the Ephraimites, chased their foul-mouthed but cowardly assailants out of the territory ; and rushing to the fords of the Jordan, intercepted and slew every fugitive. The method adopted for discovering an Ephraimite was by the pronounciation of a word naturally suggested by the place where they stood. "Shibboleth," means a stream ; "Sibboleth," a burden. The Eastern tribe had, it seems, a dialectical provincialism in the sound of Shibboleth ; and the Ephraimites could not bring their organs to pronounce it. 7. **Jephthah died**—After a government of six years this "mighty man of valour died ;" and however difficult it may be for us to understand some passages in his history, he has been ranked by apostolic authority among the worthies of the ancient church. He was followed by a succession of minor judges, of whom the only memorials preserved relate to the number of their families and their state.

### CHAPTER XIII.

**I. ISRAEL SERVES THE PHILISTINES FORTY YEARS. 1. the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years**—The Israelites were represented (ch. 10. 6, 7,) as having fallen universally into a state of gross and confirmed idolatry, and in chastisement of this great apostacy the Lord raised up enemies that harassed them in various quarters, especially the Ammonites and Philistines. The invasions and defeat of the former were narrated in the two chapters immediately preceding this ; and now the sacred historian proceeds to describe the inroads of the latter people. The period of Philistine ascendancy comprised forty years, reckoning from the time of Elon till the death of Samson.

**2-10. AN ANGEL APPEARS TO MANOAH'S WIFE. 2. Zorah**—A Danite town (Joshua, 15. 33), lying on the common boundary of Judah and Dan, so that it was near the Philistine border. **3. the angel of the Lord**—The messenger of the covenant, the divine personage who made so many remarkable appearances of a similar kind already described. **5. thou shalt conceive and bear a son**—This predicted child being to be a Nazarite, the mother was, for the sake of her promised offspring, required to practice the rigid abstinence of the Nazarite law (see Numbers, 6. 3). **he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines**—A prophecy encouraging to a patriotic man ; the terms of it, however, indicated that the period of deliverance was still to be distant. **6-8. then Manoah entreated the Lord**—On being informed by his wife of the welcome intimation, the husband made it the subject of earnest prayer to God, and this is a remarkable instance, indicative of the connection which God has established between prayer and the fulfilment of his promises.

**11-14. THE ANGEL APPEARS TO MANOAH. II. Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman?**—Manoah's intense desire for the repetition of the angel's visit was prompted not by doubts or anxieties of any kind, but was the fruit of lively faith, and of his



great anxiety to follow out the instructions given. "Blessed was he who had not seen yet had believed."

**15-23. MANOAH'S SACRIFICE.** 15. **Manoah said unto the angel, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid**—The stranger declined the intended hospitality; and intimated that, if the meat were to be an offering, it must be presented to the Lord. Manoah needed this instruction, for his purpose was to offer the prepared viands to Him, not as the Lord, but as what he imagined him to be, not even an angel (*v.* 16), but a prophet or merely human messenger. It was on this account, and not as rejecting divine honours, that he spoke in this manner to Manoah. The angel's language was exactly similar to that of our Lord (Matthew, 19, 17). 17. **Manoah said unto the angel, What is thy name?** Manoah's request elicited the most unequivocal proofs of the divinity of this supernatural visitor—in his name "secret" (in the *Marg.* wonderful), and in the miraculous flame that betokened the acceptance of the sacrifice.

**24, 25. SAMSON BORN.** 24. **the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson**—the birth of this child of promise, and the report of the important national services he was to render, must, from the first, have made him an object of peculiar interest and careful instruction. 25. **the spirit of God began to move him at times**—Not, probably, as it moved the prophets, who were charged with an inspired message, but kindling in his youthful bosom a spirit of high and devoted patriotism. **Eshtaol**—The free city. It as well as Zorah stood on the border between Judah and Dan.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

**1-5. SAMSON DESIRES A WIFE OF THE PHILISTINES.** 1 **Tim-nath**—Now Tibna, about three miles from Zorah, his birth-place. **saw a woman . . . of the Philistines; and told his father and his mother, and said, Get her for me to wife**—In the East parents did, and do in many cases still, negotiate the marriage alliances for their sons. During their period of ascendancy, the Philistine invaders had settled in the towns, and the intercourse between them and the Israelites was often of such a friendly and familiar character as to issue in matrimonial relations. Moreover, the Philistines were not in the number of the seven devoted nations of Canaan—with whom the law forbade them to marry. 3. **Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren**—*i. e.*, of thine own tribe—a Danite woman. **Samson said, Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well**—*is lit.*, "She is right in mine eyes"—not by her beautiful countenance or handsome figure, but *right or fit for his purpose*. And this throws light on the historian's remark in reference to the resistance of his parents; "they knew not that it was of the Lord that he sought an occasion against the Philistines"—rather *from* the Philistines—originating on their side. The Lord, by a course of retributive proceedings, was about to destroy the Philistine power, and the means which He meant to employ was not the forces of a numerous army, as in the

case of the preceding judges, but the miraculous prowess of the single-handed champion of Israel. In these circumstances, the provocation to hostilities could only spring out of a *private* quarrel, and this marriage scheme was doubtless suggested by the secret influence of the Spirit as the best way of accomplishing the intended result.

**6-9. HE KILLS A LION.** 5-9. **a young lion**—*Heb.*, a lion in the pride of his youthful prime. The wild mountain passes of Judah were the lairs of savage beasts, and most or all the "lions" of Scripture occur in that wild country. His rending and killing the shaggy monster, without any weapon in his hand, was accomplished by that superhuman courage and strength which the *occasional* influences of the Spirit enabled him to put forth, and by the exertion of which, in such private incidental circumstances, he was gradually trained to confide in them for the more public work to which he was destined. **7. he went down and talked with the woman**—the interview between the youth of different sexes is extremely rare and limited in the East, and generally after they are betrothed. **8. after a time he returned to take her**—probably after the lapse of a year—the usual interval between the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage. It was spent by the bride elect with her parents in preparation for the nuptials—and at the proper time the bridegroom returned to take her home. **he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion; and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion**—In such a climate, the myriads of insects, and the ravages of birds of prey, together with the influence of the solar rays, would, in a few months, put the carcass in a state inviting to such cleanly animals as bees.

**10, 11. HIS MARRIAGE FEAST.** **10. his father went down**—the father is mentioned as the head and representative of Samson's relatives. **Samson made there a feast**—the wedding festivity lasted a week. The men and women were probably entertained in separate apartments—the bride, with her female relatives, at her parents' house; Samson, in some place obtained for the occasion, as he was a stranger. A large number of paranyms, or "friends of the bridegroom," furnished, no doubt, by the bride's family, attended his party; ostensibly to honour the nuptials, but really as spies on his proceedings.

**12-18. HIS RIDDLE.** **12-18. I will put forth a riddle**—riddles are a favourite oriental amusement at festive entertainments of this nature, and rewards are offered to those who give the solution. Samson's riddle related to honey got in the lion's carcass. The prize he offered was thirty *Sindinim*, or shirts, and thirty changes of garments, probably woollen. Three days were passed in vain attempts to unravel the enigma. The festive week was fast drawing to a close, when they secretly enlisted the services of the new married wife, who having got the secret, revealed it to her friends. **If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle**—a metaphor borrowed from agricultural pursuits, in which not only oxen but cows and heifers were, and continue to be, employed in dragging the plow. Divested of metaphor, the meaning

is taken by some in a criminal sense, but probably bears no more than that they had resorted to the aid of his wife—an unworthy expedient, which might have been deemed by a man of less noble spirit and generosity, as releasing him from the obligation to fulfil his bargain.

**19, 20. HE SLAYS THIRTY PHILISTINES.** 19. **went to Askelon, and slew thirty men**—This town was about twenty-four miles west by south-west from Timnath; and his selection of this place, which was dictated by the Divine Spirit, was probably owing to its bitter hostility to Israel. **took their spoil**—the custom of stripping a slain enemy was not unknown in Hebrew warfare. 20. **Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he used as his friend**—*i. e.*, “the friend of the bridegroom,” who was the medium of communicating during the festivities between him and his bride; and whose acceptance of her hand, therefore, was an act of base treachery, that could not fail to provoke the just resentment of Samson.

## CHAPTER XV.

**1, 2. SAMSON IS DENIED HIS WIFE.** 1. **in the time of wheat harvest**—*i. e.*, about the end of our April, or the beginning of our May. The shocks of grain were then gathered into heaps, and lying on the field, or on the threshing-floors. It was the dry season, dry far beyond our experience, and the grain in a most combustible state. **Samson visited his wife with a kid**—It is usual for a visitor in the East to carry some present; in this case it might be not only as a token of civility, but of reconciliation, he said—*i. e.*, to himself. It was his secret purpose. **into the chamber**—The female apartments or harem. 2. **her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her**—This allegation was a mere sham—a flimsy pretext to excuse his refusal of admittance. The proposal he made of a marriage with her younger sister was but an insult to Samson, and one which it was unlawful for an Israelite to accept (Leviticus, 18. 18).

**3-8. HE BURNS THE PHILISTINES' CORN.** 3. **Samson said, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines**—This nefarious conduct provoked the hero's just indignation, and he resolved to take signal vengeance. 4. **went and caught three hundred foxes**—Rather jackals; an animal between a wolf and a fox, which, unlike our fox, a solitary creature, prowls in large packs or herds, and abounds in the mountains of Palestine. The collection of so great a number would require both time and assistance. **took fire-brands**—Torches or matches, which would burn slowly, retaining the fire, and blaze fiercely when blown by the wind. He put two jackals together, tail by tail, and fastened tightly a fire-match between them. At night-fall, he lighted the fire-brand, and sent each pair successively down from the hills, into the “Shefela” or plain of Philistia, lying on the borders of Dan and Judah, a rich and extensive corn district. The pain caused by the fire would make the animals toss about to a wide extent, kindling one great conflagration; but no one could render

assistance to his neighbour: the devastation was so general, the panic would be so great. 6. **who hath done this**—The author of this outrage, and the cause that provoked such an extraordinary retaliation, soon became known; and the sufferers, enraged by the destruction of their crops, rushing with tumultuous fury to the house of Samson's wife, "burnt her and her father with fire." This was a remarkable retribution. To avoid this menace, she had betrayed her husband: and, by that unprincipled conduct, eventually exposed herself to the horrid doom which, at the sacrifice of conjugal fidelity, she had sought to escape. 7. **Samson said, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you**—By that act the husbandmen had been the instruments in avenging his private and personal wrongs. But as a judge, divinely appointed to deliver Israel, his work of retribution was not yet accomplished. 8. **smote them hip and thigh**—A proverbial expression for a merciless slaughter.

9-13. **HE IS BOUND BY THE MEN OF JUDAH, AND DELIVERED TO THE PHILISTINES.** 8. **he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam**—Rather went down and dwelt in the cleft—*i. e.*, the cave or cavern of the "cliff" Etam. 9. **then the Philistines went up**—to the high land of Judah. **and spread themselves in Lehi**—Now El-Lekieh, abounding with limestone cliffs; the sides of which are perforated with caves. The object of the Philistines in this expedition was to apprehend Samson, in revenge for the great slaughter he had committed on their people. With a view of freeing his own countrymen from all danger from the infuriated Philistines, he allowed himself to be bound and surrendered a fettered prisoner into their power. Exulting with joy at the near prospect of riddance from so formidable an enemy, they went to meet him. But by a sudden illapse of the Spirit he exerted his superhuman strength, and finding a new (or moist) jaw-bone of an ass, he laid hold of it, and, with no other weapon, slew a thousand men at a place which he called Ramath-lehi—*i. e.*, the hill of the jawbone. 16. **with the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men**—The inadequacy of the weapon plainly shows this to have been a miraculous feat, "a case of supernatural strength," just as the gift of prophecy is a case of supernatural knowledge. [CHALMERS.] 19. **a hollow place in the jaw**—In Lehi—taking the word as a proper noun, marking the place. **there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again**—His strength, exhausted by the violent and long-continued exertion, was recruited by the refreshing draught from the spring; and it was called En-hakkore, the "supplication well," a name which records the piety of this heroic champion.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1-3. **I. SAMSON CARRIES AWAY THE GATES OF GAZA.** **Gaza**—Now Guzzah, the capital of the largest of the five Philistine principal cities, about fifteen miles south-west of Ashkelon. The object of this visit to this city is not recorded, and unless he had

gone in disguise, it was a perilous exposure of his life in one of the enemies' strongholds. It soon transpired that he was there; and it was immediately resolved to secure him, but deeming themselves certain of their prey, the Gazites deferred the execution of their measures till the morning. **3. Samson arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city**—A ruinous pile of masonry is still pointed out as the site of the gate. It was probably a part of the town wall, and as this ruin is "toward Hebron," there is no improbability in the tradition. **carried them up to the top of an hill, that is before Hebron**—That hill is El-Montar; but by Hebron in this passage is meant "the mountains of Hebron;" for otherwise Samson, had he run night and day from the time of his flight from Gaza, could only have come on the evening of the following day within sight of the city of Hebron. The city of Gaza was, in those days, probably not less than three-quarters of an hour distant from El-Montar. To have climbed to the top of this hill with the ponderous doors and their bolts on his shoulders, through a road of thick sand, was a feat which none but a Samson could have accomplished. [VAN DE VELDE.]

**4-14. DELILAH CORRUPTED BY THE PHILISTINES. 4. he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek**—The situation of this place is not known, nor can the character of Delilah be clearly ascertained. Her abode, her mercenary character, and her heartless blandishments afford too much reason to believe she was a profligate woman. **5. the lords of the Philistines**—the five rulers deemed no means beneath their dignity to overcome this national enemy. **Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth**—They probably imagined that he carried some amulet about his person, or was in the possession of some important secret by which he had acquired such herculean strength; and they bribed Delilah, doubtless by a large reward, to discover it for them. She undertook the service, and made several attempts, plying all her arts of persuasion or blandishment in his soft and communicative moods, to extract his secret. **7. Samson said, Bind me with seven green withs**—vine tendrils, pliant twigs, or twists made of crude vegetable stalks are used in many eastern countries for ropes at the present day. **8. she bound him with them**—probably in a sportive manner, to try whether he was jesting or in earnest. **9. there were men lying in wait, abiding in the chamber**—The *Heb.* literally rendered, is, "in the inner or most secret part of the house." **10. And Delilah said**—To avoid exciting suspicion, she must have allowed some time to elapse before making this renewed attempt. **12. new ropes**—It is not said of what material they were formed; but from their being dried, it is probable they were of twigs, like the former. The *Heb.* intimates that they were twisted, and of a thick, strong description. **13. If thou weavest the seven locks of my head**—braids or tresses, into which, like many in the East, he chose to plait his hair. Working at the loom was a female employment; and Delilah's appears to have been close at hand. It was of a very simple construction; the woof was driven into the warp, not by a reed, but by a wooden spatula; the extremity of the web was fastened to a pin or stake fixed in the wall or

ground ; and while Delilah sat squatting at her loom, Samson lay stretched on the floor, with his head reclining on her lap—a position very common in the East. **went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web**—*i. e.*, the whole weaving apparatus.

**15-20. HE IS OVERCOME.** 15. **she pressed him daily with her words.**—Though disappointed and mortified, this vile woman resolved to persevere ; and, conscious how complete he was enslaved by his passion for her, she assailed him with a succession of blandishing arts, till she at length discovered the coveted secret. 17. **If I be shaven, my strength will go from me**—His herculean powers did not arise from his hair, but from his peculiar relation to God as a Nazarite. His unshorn locks were a sign of his Nazaritism, and a pledge on the part of God that his supernatural strength would be continued. 19. **she called for a man, and caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head**—It is uncertain, however, whether the ancient Hebrews cut off the hair to the same extent as Orientals now. The word employed is sometimes the same as that for shearing sheep, and, therefore, the instrument might be only scissors. 20. **He wist not that the Lord was departed from him**—what a humiliating and painful spectacle ! Deprived of the divine influences—degraded in his character—and yet, through the infatuation of a guilty passion, scarcely awake to the wretchedness of his fallen condition.

**21, 22 THE PHILISTINES TOOK HIM AND PUT OUT HIS EYES.** 21. **the Philistines took him and put out his eyes**—to this cruel privation prisoners of rank and consequence have commonly been subjected in the East, and the punishment is inflicted in various ways, by scooping out the eye-balls, by piercing the eye or destroying the sight, by holding a red-hot iron before the eyes. His security was made doubly sure by his being bound with fetters of brass (copper), not of leather like other captives. **he did grind in the prison house**—this grinding with hand mill-stones being the employment of menials, he was set to it as the deepest degradation. 22. **Howbeit his hair began to grow again**—It is probable that he had now reflected on his folly, and, becoming a sincere penitent, renewed his Nazarite vow. “His hair grew, together with his repentance, and his strength with his hairs.” [BISHOP HALL.]

**23-25. THEIR FEAST TO DAGON.** 23. **the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon**—It was a common practice in heathen nations, on the return of their solemn religious festivals, to bring forth their war prisoners from their places of confinement or slavery, and in heaping on them every species of indignity, offer their grateful tribute to the gods by whose aid they had triumphed over their enemies. Dagon was a sea-idol, usually represented as having the head and upper parts human, while the rest of the body resembled a fish.

**26-31. HIS DEATH.** 27. **there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women that beheld while Samson made sport**—This building seems to have been similar to the spacious and open amphitheatres, well known among the Romans, and still found in many countries of the East. They are built wholly of wood. The

standing place for the spectators is a wooden floor resting upon two pillars and rising on an inclined plane, so as to enable all to have a view of the area in the center. In the middle there are two large beams, on which the whole weight of the structure lies, and these beams are supported by two pillars placed almost close to each other, so that when these are unsettled or misplaced, the whole pile must tumble to the ground. 28. **Samson called unto the Lord**—His penitent and prayerful spirit seems clearly to indicate that this meditated act was not that of a vindictive suicide, and that he regarded himself as putting forth his strength in his capacity of a public magistrate. He must be considered, in fact, as dying for his country's cause, and his death was not designed or sought, except as it might be the inevitable consequence of his great effort. His prayer must have been a silent ejaculation, and from its being revealed to the historian, approved and accepted of God. 31. **Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down and took him, and brought him up, and buried him**—This awful catastrophe seems to have so completely paralysed the Philistines, that they neither attempted to prevent the removal of Samson's corpse, nor to molest the Israelites for a long time after. Thus the Israelitish hero rendered by his strength and courage signal services to his country, and was always regarded as the greatest of its champions. But his slavish subjection to the domination of his passions, was unworthy of so great a man, and lessens our respect for his character. Yet he is ranked among the ancient worthies who maintained a firm faith in God (Hebrews, II. 22).

## CHAPTER XVII.

1-4. MICAH RESTORING THE STOLEN MONEY TO HIS MOTHER. SHE MAKES IMAGES. 1. **a man of Mount Ephraim**—*i. e.*, the mountainous parts of Ephraim. This and the other narratives that follow form a miscellaneous collection or appendix to the Book of Judges, belonging to a period when the Hebrew nation was in a greatly disordered and corrupt state. This episode of Micah is connected with ch. I. 34, and it relates to his foundation of a small sanctuary of his own, a miniature representative of the Shiloh tabernacle, which he stocked with images modeled probably in imitation of the ark and cherubim. Micah and his mother were sincere in their intention to honour God. But their faith was blended with a sad amount of ignorance and delusion. The divisive course they pursued, as well as the will-worship they practiced, subjected the perpetrators to the penalty of death. 3. **a graven image and a molten image**—The one carved from a block of wood or stone, to be plated over with silver; the other, a figure formed of the solid metal cast into a mould. It is observable, however, that only 200 shekels were given to the founder; and probably the expense of making two such figures of silver, with their appurtenances (pedestals, bases, &c.), might easily cost, in those days, 200 shekels, which, at 2s. 4d. each, is about £23, a sum not

adequate to the formation of large statues. [TAYLOR'S FRAGMENT.] 5. **the man Micah had a house of gods**—*Heb.*, a house of God—a domestic chapel, a private religious establishment of his own. **an ephod**—See Ex. 28. 4. **Teraphim**—Tutelary gods of the household (see Genesis, 31. 19, 30). **consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest**—The assumption of the priestly office by any one out of the family of Aaron was a direct violation of the divine law (Numbers, 3. 10; 16. 17. Deuteronomy, 21. 5; Hebrews, 5. 4). 6. **every man did that which was right in his own eyes**—From want of a settled government there was no one to call him to account. No punishment followed any crime. 7. **Beth-lehem-judah**—So called in contradistinction to a town of the same name in Zebulun (Joshua, 19. 15). **of the family** (*i. e.*, tribe) **of Judah**—Men of the tribe of Levi might connect themselves, as Aaron did (Exodus, 6. 23), by marriage with another tribe; and this young Levite belonged to the tribe of Judah, by his mother's side, which accounts for his being in Bethlehem, not one of the Levitical cities. 8. **the man departed to sojourn where he could find a place**—A competent provision being secured for every member of the Levitical order, his wandering about showed him to have been a person of a roving disposition, or unsettled habits. In the course of his journeying he came to the house of Micah, who, on learning what he was, engaged his permanent services. 10. **Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, be unto me a father**—A spiritual father, to conduct the religious services of my establishment; he was to receive, in addition to his board, a salary of ten shekels of silver, equal to 25s. a year. **a suit of apparel**—Not only dress for ordinary use, but vestments suitable for the discharge of his priestly functions. 12. **Micah consecrated the Levite**—*Heb.*, filled his hand. This act of consecration was not less unlawful for Micah to perform than for this Levite to receive (see ch. 18. 30). 13. **now I know that the Lord will do me good**—The removal of his son, followed by the installation of this Levite into the priestly office, seems to have satisfied his conscience, that, by what he deemed the orderly ministrations of religion, he would prosper. This expression of his hope evinces the united influence of ignorance and superstition.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**1-26. THE DANITES SEEK OUT AN INHERITANCE. 1-6. In those days the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in**—The Danites had a territory assigned them as well as the other tribes. But either through indolence, or a lack of energy, they did not acquire the full possession of their allotment, but suffered a considerable portion of it to be wrested out of their hands by the encroachments of their powerful neighbours, the Philistines; and, in consequence, being straitened for room, a considerable number resolved on trying to effect a new and additional settlement in a remote part of the land. A small deputation being dispatched to reconnoiter the country, arrived on their progress northward at



the residence of Micah; and recognizing his priest as one of their former acquaintances, or perhaps by his provincial dialect, they eagerly enlisted his services in ascertaining the result of their present expedition. His answer, though apparently promising, was delusive, and really as ambiguous as those of the heathen oracles. This application brings out still more clearly and fully than the schism of Micah, the woeful degeneracy of the times. The Danites expressed no emotions either of surprise or of indignation at a Levite daring to assume the priestly functions, and at the existence of a rival establishment to that of Shiloh. They are ready to seek, through means of the teraphim, the information that could only be lawfully applied for through the High Priest's Urim, and, being thus equally erroneous in their views and habits as Micah, show the low state of religion, and how much superstition prevailed in all parts of the land. 7-10. **the five men departed, and came to Laish** — or Leshem (Joshua, 19. 47), supposed to have been peopled by a colony of Zidonians. The place was very secluded — the soil rich in the abundance and variety of its produce, and the inhabitants, following the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, lived in their fertile and sequestered valley, according to the Zidonian style of ease and security, happy among themselves, and maintaining little or no communication with the rest of the world. The discovery of this northern paradise seemed, to the delight of the Danite spies, an accomplishment of the priest's prediction, and they hastened back to inform their brethren in the South both of the value of their prize, and how easily it could be made their prey. 11. **there went thence of the family of the Danites six hundred men** — This was the collective number of the men who were equipped with arms to carry out this expeditionary enterprise, without including the families and furniture of the emigrants (*v.* 21). Their journey led them through the territory of Judah, and their first halting-place was "behind," that is, on the west of Kirjath-jearim, on a spot called afterward, "the camp of Dan." Prosecuting the northern route, they skirted the base of the Ephraimite hills; and, on approaching the neighbourhood of Micah's residence, the spies having given information that a private sanctuary was kept there, the priest of which had rendered them important service when on their exploring expedition, it was unanimously agreed that both he and the furniture of the establishment would be a valuable acquisition to their proposed settlement. A plan of spoliation was immediately formed. While the armed men stood sentinels at the gates, the five spies broke into the chapel, pillaged the images and vestments, and succeeded in bribing the priest also by a tempting offer to transfer his services to their new colony. Taking charge of the ephod, the teraphim and the graven image, "he went in the midst of the people" — a central position assigned him in the march, perhaps for his personal security; but more probably in imitation of the place appointed for the priests and the ark, in the middle of the congregated tribes, on the marches through the wilderness. This theft presents a curious medley of low morality and strong religious feeling. The Danites exemplified a deep-seated principle of our nature — that

mankind have religious affections, which must have an object on which these may be exercised, while they are often not very discriminating in the choice of the objects. In proportion to the slender influence religion wields over the heart, the greater is the importance attached to external rites ; and, in the exact observance of these, the conscience is fully satisfied, and seldom or never molested by reflections on the breach of minor morals. 22-26. **the men that were in the houses near to Micah's were gathered together**—The robbers of the chapel being soon detected, a hot pursuit was forthwith commenced by Micah, at the head of a considerable body of followers. The readiness with which they joined in the attempt to recover the stolen articles affords a presumption that the advantages of the chapel had been open to all in the neighbourhood ; and the importance which Micah, like Laban, attached to his teraphim, is seen by the urgency with which he pursued the thieves, and the risk of his life in attempting to procure their restoration. Finding his party, however, not a match for the Danites, he thought it prudent to desist, well knowing the rule which was then prevalent in the land, that

“They should take who had the power,  
And they should keep who could.”

**27-29. THEY WIN LAISH.** 27. **they came unto Laish . . . smote the people, and burnt the city**—“We are revolted by this inroad and massacre of a quiet and secure people. Nevertheless, if the original grant of Canaan to the Israelites gave them the warrant of a Divine commission and command for this enterprise, that sanctifies all, and legalizes all.” [CHALMERS.] This place seems to have been a dependency of Zidon, the distance of which, however, rendered it impossible to obtain aid thence in the sudden emergency. 29. **they built a city, and called it Dan**—It was in the northern extremity of the land, and hence the origin of the phrase, “from Dan to Beersheba.”

**30, 31. THEY SET UP IDOLATRY.** 30. **The children of Dan set up the graven image**—Their distance secluded them from the rest of the Israelites, and doubtless this, which was their apology for not going to Shiloh, was the cause of perpetuating idolatry among them for many generations.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**1-15. A LEVITE GOING TO BETHLEHEM, TO FETCH HIS WIFE.**  
1. **It came to pass in those days**—The painfully interesting episode that follows, together with the intestine commotion the report of it produced throughout the country, belongs to the same early period of anarchy and prevailing disorder. **a certain Levite took a concubine**—The priests under the Mosaic law enjoyed the privilege of marrying as well as other classes of the people. It was no disreputable connection this Levite had formed ; for a nuptial engagement with a concubine wife (though as wanting in some outward ceremonies, it was reckoned a secondary or inferior relation-

ship); possessed the true essence of marriage; it was not only lawful, but sanctioned by the example of many good men. 2. **she went away from him unto her father's house**—The cause of the separation assigned in our version rendered it unlawful for her husband to take her back (Deuteronomy, 24. 4), and according to the uniform style of sentiment and practice in the East, she would have been put to death, had she gone to her father's family. Other versions concur with Josephus, in representing the reason of the flight from her husband's house to be, that she was disgusted with him, through frequent brawls. 3. **and her husband arose, and went after her to speak friendly to her**—*Heb.*, "speak to her heart," in a kindly and affectionate manner, so as to rekindle her affection. Accompanied by a servant, he arrived at the house of his father-in-law, who rejoiced to meet him, in the hope that a complete reconciliation would be brought about between his daughter and her husband. The Levite, yielding to the hospitable importunities of his father-in-law, prolonged his stay for days. 8. **tarried (with reluctance) until afternoon**—*lit.*, the decline of the day. People in the East, who take little or nothing to eat in the morning, do not breakfast till from 10 to 12 A. M., and this meal the hospitable relative had purposely protracted to so late a period as to afford an argument for urging a further stay. 9. **the day draweth toward evening**—*Heb.*, the pitching time of day. Travelers who set out at daybreak, usually halt about the middle of the afternoon the first evening, to enjoy rest and refreshment. It was, then, too late a time to commence a journey. But duty, perhaps, obliged the Levite to indulge no further delay. 10. **the man departed, and came over against Jebus**—The note, "which is Jerusalem," must have been inserted by Ezra or some later hand. Jebus being still, though not entirely (ch. i. 8), in the possession of the old inhabitants, the Levite resisted the advice of his attendant to enter it, and determined rather to press forward to pass the night in Gibeah, which he knew was occupied by Israelites. The distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is about six miles. The event showed that it would have been better to have followed the advice of his attendant—to have trusted themselves among aliens, than among their own countrymen. 13. **in Gibeah, or in Ramah**—The first of these places was five miles north-east, the other from four to five north of Jerusalem. 15. **he went in and sat him down in a street of the city**—The towns of Palestine at this remote period could not, it seems, furnish any establishment in the shape of an inn or public lodging-house; and hence we conclude that the custom, which is still frequently witnessed in the cities of the East, was then not uncommon, for travelers who were late in arriving, and who had no introduction to a private family, to spread their bedding in the streets, or wrapping themselves up in their cloaks, pass the night in the open air. In the Arab towns and villages, however, the sheikh, or some other person, usually comes out and urgently invites the strangers to his house. This was done also in ancient Palestine (Genesis, 18. 4; 19. 2); and that the same hospitality was not shown in Gibeah, seems to have been owing to the bad character of the people.

**16-21. AN OLD MAN ENTERTAINS HIM AT GIBEAH.** 16. **there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of Mount Ephraim**—And perhaps his hospitality was quickened by learning the stranger's occupation, and that he was on his return to his duties at Shiloh. 19. **there is no want of any thing**—In answering the kindly inquiries of the old man, the Levite deemed it right to state that he was under no necessity of being burdensome on any one, for he possessed all that was required to relieve his wants. Oriental travelers always carry a stock of provisions with them; and knowing that even the khans or lodging-houses they may find on their way afford nothing beyond rest and shelter, they are careful to lay in a supply of food both for themselves and their beasts. Instead of hay, which is seldom met with, they use chopped straw, which, with a mixture of barley, beans or such like, forms the provender for cattle. The old man, however, in the warmth of a generous heart, refused to listen to any explanation, and bidding the Levite keep his stock for any emergency that might occur in the remainder of his journey, invited them to accept of the hospitalities of his house for the night. 20. **only lodge not in the street**—As this is no rare or singular a circumstance in the East, the probability is that the old man's earnest dissuasive from such a procedure arose from his acquaintance with the infamous practices of the place.

**22-28. THE GIBEAHITES ABUSE HIS CONCUBINE TO DEATH.** 22. **certain sons of Belial beset the house**—The narrative of the horrid outrage that was committed—of the proposal of the old man—the unfeeling, careless, and, in many respects, inexplicable conduct of the Levite toward his wife, disclose a state of morality that would have appeared incredible, did it not rest on the testimony of the sacred historian. Both the one and the other ought to have protected the female inmates of the house, even though at the expense of their lives, or thrown themselves on God's providence. It should be noted, however, that the guilt of such a foul outrage is not fastened on the general population of Gibeah. 29. **divided her into twelve pieces**—The want of a regular government warranted an extraordinary step; and certainly no method could have been imagined more certain of rousing universal horror and indignation than this terrible summons of the Levite.

## CHAPTER XX.

**1-7. THE LEVITE, IN A GENERAL ASSEMBLY, DECLARES HIS WRONG.** 1. **all the congregation was gathered as one man**—In consequence of the immense sensation the horrid tragedy of Gibeah had produced, a national assembly was convened, at which "the chief of all the people" from all parts of the land, including the Eastern tribes, appeared as delegates. **Mizpeh**—the place of convention (for there were other Mizpehs), was in a town situated on the confines of Judah and Benjamin (Joshua, 15. 38; 18. 26). Assemblies were frequently held there afterward (1 Samuel, 7. 11; 10. 17); and as it was but a short distance from Shiloh, the phrase

"Unto the Lord," may be taken in its usual sense, as denoting consultation of the oracle. This circumstance, together with the convention being called "the assembly of the people of God," seems to indicate that, amid the excited passions of the nation, those present felt the profound gravity of the occasion, and adopted the best means of maintaining a becoming deportment. 3. **Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh** — Some suppose that Benjamin had been passed over, the crime having been perpetrated within the territory of that tribe; and that, as the concubine's corpse had been divided into twelve pieces — two had been sent to Manasseh, one respectively to the Western and Eastern division. It is more probable that Benjamin had received a formal summons like the other tribes, but chose to treat it with indifference or haughty disdain. 4-7. **the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said** — The injured husband gave a brief and unvarnished recital of the tragic outrage, from which it appears that force was used, which he could not resist. His testimony was doubtless corroborated by those of his servant and the old Ephraimite. There was no need of strong or highly coloured description to work upon the feelings of the audience. The facts spoke for themselves, and produced one common sentiment of detestation and vengeance.

8. **THEIR DECREE. 8. all the people arose as one man** — The extraordinary unanimity that prevailed shows that, notwithstanding great disorders had broken out in many parts, the people were sound at the core; and remembering their national covenant with God, now felt the necessity of wiping out so foul a stain on their character as a people. It was resolved that the inhabitants of Gibeah should be subjected to condign punishment. But the resolutions were conditional. For as the common law of nation and nations requires that an inquiry should be made, and satisfaction demanded, before committing an act of hostility or vengeance, messengers were dispatched through the whole territory of Benjamin, demanding the immediate surrender or execution of the delinquents. The request was just and reasonable; and by refusing it the Benjamites virtually made themselves a party in the quarrel. It must not be supposed that the people of this tribe were insensible or indifferent to the atrocious character of the crime that had been committed on their soil. But their patriotism or their pride were offended by the hostile demonstration of the other tribes. The passions were inflamed on both sides; but certainly the Benjamites incurred an awful responsibility by the attitude of resistance they assumed. 14-17. **the children of Benjamin gathered themselves out of the cities unto Gibeah** — Allowing their valour to be ever so great, nothing but blind passion and unbending obstinacy could have impelled them to take the field against their brethren with such a disparity of numbers. 16. **left-handed: every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth, and not miss** — The sling was one of the earliest weapons used in war. The Hebrew sling was probably similar to that of the Egyptian, consisting of a leather thong, broad in the middle, with a loop at

one end, by which it was firmly held with the hand ; the other end terminated in a lash, which was let slip, when the stone was thrown. Those skilled in the use of it, as the Benjamites were, could hit the mark with unerring certainty. A good sling could carry its full force to the distance of 200 yards.

**18-28. THE ISRAELITES LOSE FORTY THOUSAND. 18-28. the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God**—This consultation at Shiloh was right. But they ought to have done it at the commencement of their proceedings. Instead of this, all their plans were formed, and never doubting, it would seem, that the war was just and inevitable, the only subject of their inquiry related to the precedency of the tribes—a point which it is likely was discussed in the Assembly. Had they asked counsel of God sooner, their expedition would have been conducted on a different principle—most probably by reducing the number of fighting men, as in the case of Gideon's army. As it was, the vast amount of volunteers formed an excessive and unwieldy force, unfit for strenuous and united action against a small, compact and well-directed army. A panic ensued, and the confederate tribes, in two successive engagements, sustained great losses. These repeated disasters (notwithstanding their attack on Benjamin had been divinely authorized), overwhelmed them with shame and sorrow. Led to reflection, they became sensible of their guilt in not repressing their national idolatries, as well as in too proudly relying on their superior numbers, and the precipitate rashness of this expedition. Having humbled themselves by prayer and fasting, as well as observed the appointed method of expiating their sins, they were assured of acceptance as well as of victory. The presence and services of Phinehas on this occasion help us to ascertain the chronology thus far, that the date of the occurrence must be fixed shortly after the death of Joshua.

**29-48. THEY DESTROY ALL THE BENJAMITES, EXCEPT SIX HUNDRED 29. Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah**—A plan was formed of taking that city by stratagem, similar to that employed in the capture of Ai. **Baal-tamar**—a palm grove, where Baal was worshiped. The main army of the confederate tribes was drawn up there. **33. out of the meadows of Gibeah**—*Heb.*, the caves of Gibeah, a hill—in which the ambuscades lay hid. **34. There came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men**—this was a third division, different both from the ambuscade and the army, who were fighting at Baal-tamar. The general account stated in verse 35, is followed by a detailed narrative of the battle, which is continued to the end of the chapter. **45. They turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon**—Numbers of the fugitives found refuge in the caves of this rocky mountain, which is situated to the north-east of Beth-el. Such places are still sought as secure retreats in times of danger ; and until the method of blowing up rocks by gunpowder became known, a few men could, in such caves, sustain a siege for months. **46. all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men**—On comparing this with verse 35, it will be seen that the loss is stated here in round numbers, and is confined only to that

Gaza



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of the third day. We must conclude that 1,000 had fallen during the two previous engagements, in order to make the aggregate amount given (*v.* 15). 48. **the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword**—This frightful vengeance, extending from Gibeah to the whole territory of Benjamin, was executed under the impetuous impulse of highly excited passions. But doubtless the Israelites were only the agents of inflicting the righteous retributions of God; and the memory of this terrible crisis, which led almost to the extermination of a whole tribe, was conducive to the future good of the whole nation.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1-15. **THE PEOPLE BEWAIL THE DESOLATION OF ISRAEL.** 2. **The people came to the house of God, . . . and lifted up their voices and wept**—The characteristic fickleness of the Israelites was not long in being displayed; for scarcely had they cooled from the fierceness of their sanguinary vengeance, than they began to relent, and rushed to the opposite extreme of self-accusation and grief at the desolation which their impetuous zeal had produced. Their victory saddened and humbled them. Their feelings on the occasion were expressed by a public and solemn service of expiation at the house of God. And yet this extraordinary observance, though it enabled them to find vent for their painful emotions, did not afford them full relief—for they were fettered by the obligation of a religious vow, heightened by the addition of a solemn anathema on every violator of the oath. There is no previous record of this oath; but the purport of it was, that they would treat the perpetrators of this Gibeah atrocity in the same way as the Canaanites, who were doomed to destruction; and the entering into this solemn league was of a piece with the rest of their inconsiderate conduct in this whole affair. 6. **there is one tribe cut off from Israel this day**—*i. e.*, in danger of becoming extinct; for, as it appears from *v.* 7, they had massacred all the women and children of Benjamin, and 600 men alone survived of the whole tribe. The prospect of such a blank in the catalogue of the twelve tribes—such a gap in the national arrangements was too painful to contemplate, and immediate measures must be taken to prevent this great catastrophe. 8. **there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly**—This city lay within the territory of Eastern Manasseh, about fifteen miles east of the Jordan, and was, according to Josephus, the capital of Gilead. The ban which the assembled tribes had pronounced at Mizpeh seemed to impose on them the necessity of punishing its inhabitants for not joining the crusade against Benjamin; and thus, with a view of repairing the consequences of one rash proceeding, they hurriedly rushed to the perpetration of another, though a smaller, tragedy. But it appears (*v.* 11) that, besides acting in fulfilment of their oath, the Israelites had the additional object by this raid of supplying wives to the Benjamite remnant. This shows the intemperate fury of the

Israelites in the indiscriminate slaughter of the women and children.

**16-21. THE ELDERS CONSULT HOW TO FIND WIVES FOR THOSE THAT WERE LEFT.** 16. **The elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain**—Though the young women of Jabesh-gilead had been carefully spared, the supply was found inadequate, and some other expedient must be resorted to. 17. **There must be an inheritance for them that are escaped of Benjamin**—As they were the only rightful owners of the territory, provision must be made for transmitting it to their legitimate heirs, and a new act of violence was meditated (*v.* 19); the opportunity for which was afforded by the approaching festival—a feast generally supposed to be the feast of tabernacles. This, like the other annual feasts, was held in Shiloh, and its celebration was attended with more social hilarity and holiday rejoicings than the rest. 19. **On the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem**—The exact site of the place was described evidently for the direction of the Benjamites. 21. **daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances**—the dance was anciently a part of the religious observance; and it was done on festive occasions, as it is still in the East, not in town, but in the open air, in some adjoining field, the women being by themselves. The young women being alone, indulging their light and buoyant spirits, and apprehensive of no danger, facilitated the execution of the scheme of seizing them, which closely resembles the Sabine rape in Roman history. The elders undertook to reconcile the families to the forced abduction of their daughters. And thus the expression of their public sanction to this deed of violence afforded a new evidence of the evils and difficulties into which the unhappy precipitancy of the Israelites in this crisis had involved them.

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THE  
BOOK OF RUTH.

CHAPTER I.

**1-5. ELIMELECH DRIVEN BY FAMINE INTO MOAB, DIES THERE.**  
**1. in the days when the judges ruled**—The beautiful and interesting story which this book relates, belongs to the early times of the Judges. The precise date cannot be ascertained. **2. Elimelech**—signifies “My God is king.” **Naomi**—fair or pleasant; and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, are supposed to be the same as Joash and Saraph (1 Chronicles, 4. 22). **Ephrathites**—The ancient name of Bethlehem was Ephrath (Genesis, 35. 19; 48. 7), which was continued after the occupation of the land by the Hebrews, even down to the time of the prophet Micah (Micah, 5. 2). **Bethlehem-Judah**—so called to distinguish it from a town of the same name in Zebulun. The family, compelled to emigrate to Moab through pressure of a famine, settled for several years in that country; and after the death of their father, the two sons married Moabite women. This was a violation of the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy, 7. 3; 23. 3; Ezra, 9. 2; Nehemiah, 13. 23), and Jewish writers say that the early deaths of both the young men were Divine judgments inflicted on them for those unlawful connections.

**6-18. NAOMI, RETURNING HOME, RUTH ACCOMPANIES HER.**  
**6. 7. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab**—The aged widow, longing to enjoy the privileges of Israel, resolved to return to her native land as soon as she was assured that the famine had ceased, and made the necessary arrangements with her daughters-in-law. **8. Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house**—In Eastern countries women occupy apartments separate from those of men, and daughters are most frequently in those of their mother. **The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead**—*i. e.*, with my sons, your husbands, while they lived. **9. the Lord grant that ye may find rest**—enjoy a life of tranquillity, undisturbed by the cares, incumbrances, and vexatious troubles to which a state of widowhood is peculiarly exposed. **Then she kissed them**—the Oriental manner when friends are parting. **11. are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands**—This alludes to the ancient custom (Genesis, 38. 26), afterward expressly sanctioned by the law of Moses (Deuteronomy, 25. 5), which required a younger son to marry the widow of his deceased brother. **12. 13. Turn again, my daughters, go your ways**—That Naomi should dissuade her daughters-in-law so strongly from accompanying her to the land of Israel may appear strange. But it was the wisest and most prudent course for her to adopt; 1st, Because they might be influenced by hopes which could not be realized; 2d, Because they might be led, under temporary excitement, to take a step they might afterward regret; and 3d, Because the sincerity and strength of their conversion to the true religion, which she had taught them, would be

thoroughly tested. 13. **the hand of the Lord is gone out against me**—*i. e.*, I am not only not in a condition to provide you with other husbands, but so reduced in circumstances that I cannot think of your being subjected to privations with me. The arguments of Naomi prevailed with Orpah, who returned to her people and her gods. But Ruth clave unto her; and even in the pages of Sterne, that great master of pathos, there is nothing which so calls forth the sensibilities of the reader as the simple effusion he has borrowed from Scripture—of Ruth to her mother-in-law. [CHALMERS.]

19-22. **THEY COME TO BETHLEHEM.** 19-22. **all the city was moved about them**—The present condition of Naomi—a forlorn and desolate widow, presented so painful a contrast to the flourishing state of prosperity and domestic bliss in which she had been at her departure. **in the beginning of barley harvest**—corresponding to the end of our March.

## CHAPTER II.

1-3. **RUTH GLEANS IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.** 2. **Ruth said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field to glean**—The right of gleaning was conferred by a positive law on the widow, the poor, and the stranger (see Leviticus, 19. 9, 10; Deuteronomy, 24. 19, 21). But liberty to glean *behind the reapers* was not a right that could be claimed; it was a privilege granted or refused according to the good will or favour of the owner. 3. **her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz**—Fields in Palestine being uninclosed, the phrase signifies that portion of the open ground which lay within the landmarks of Boaz.

4-23. **HE TAKES KNOWLEDGE OF HER, AND SHOWS HER FAVOR.** 4. **Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you**—This pious salutation between the master and his labourers strongly indicates the state of religious feeling among the rural population of Israel at that time, as well as the artless, happy and unsuspecting simplicity which characterized the manners of the people. The same patriarchal style of speaking is still preserved in the East. 5. **his servant that was set over the reapers**—an overseer, whose special duty was to superintend the operations in the field, to supply provisions to the reapers, and pay them for their labour in the evening. 7. **she said, Let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves**—Various modes of reaping are practiced in the East. Where the crop is thin and short, it is plucked up by the roots. In other states it is cut with the sickle. Whether reaped in one way or the other, the grain is cast into sheaves loosely thrown together, to be subjected to the process of threshing, which takes place, for the most part, immediately after the reaping. Field labours were begun early in the morning—before the day became oppressively hot. **she hath tarried a little in the house**—*i. e.*, the field tent, erected for the occasional rest and refreshment of the labourers. 8, 9. **Boaz said unto Ruth, Abide fast by my maidens**—The reaping was per-

formed by women, while the assortment of sheaves was the duty of men-servants—the same division of harvest labour obtains in Syria still. Boaz not only granted to Ruth the full privilege of gleaning after his reapers, but provided for her personal comforts. **go unto the vessel and drink of that which the young men have drawn**—gleaners were sometimes allowed, by kind and charitable masters, to partake of the refreshments provided for the reapers. The vessels alluded to were skin bottles, filled with water—and the bread was soaked in vinegar (*v.* 14); a kind of poor, weak wine, sometimes mingled with a little olive oil—very cooling, as would be required in harvest-time. This grateful refection is still used in the harvest field. 14. **he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left**—some of the new grain, roasted on the spot, and fit for use after being rubbed in the hands—a favourite viand in the East. He gave her so much that, after satisfying her own wants, she had some (*v.* 18) in reserve for her mother-in-law. 16. **let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose for her**—The gleaners in the East glean with much success; for a great quantity of corn is scattered in the reaping, as well as in their manner of carrying it. One may judge, then, of the large quantity which Ruth would gather, in consequence of the liberal orders given to the servants. These extraordinary marks of favour were not only given from a kindly disposition, but from regard to her good character and devoted attachment to her venerable relative. 17. **and beat out that she had gleaned**—when the quantity of grain was small, it was beat out by means of a stick. **an ephah**—supposed to contain about a bushel. 20. **the man is one of our next kinsmen**—*Heb.*, “one of our redeemers”—on whom it devolves to protect us, to purchase our lands, and marry you, the relict of his next kinsman. She said, “one of them,” not that there were many in the same close relationship, but that he was a very near kinsman, one other individual only having the precedence. 21. **all my harvest**—both barley and wheat harvests. The latter was at the end of May or the beginning of June. 22. **Naomi said unto Ruth, It is good that thou go out with his maidens**—a prudent recommendation to Ruth to accept the generous invitation of Boaz, lest, if she were seen straying into other fields, she might not only run the risk of rude treatment, but displease him by seeming indifferent to his kind liberality. Moreover, the observant mind of the old matron had already discerned, in all Boaz's attentions to Ruth, the germs of a stronger affection, which she wished to increase.

### CHAPTER III.

1-13. BY NAOMI'S INSTRUCTIONS, RUTH LIES AT BOAZ'S FEET, WHO ACKNOWLEDGES THE DUTY OF A KINSMAN. 2. **he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor**—The winnowing process is performed by throwing up the grain, after being trodden down, against the wind with a shovel. The threshing-floor, which was commonly on the harvest-field, was carefully leveled with a

large cylindrical roller, and consolidated with chalk, that weeds might not spring up, and that it might not chop with drought. The farmer usually remained all night in harvest-time on the threshing-floor, not only for the protection of his valuable grain, but for the winnowing. That operation was performed in the evening to catch the breezes which blow after the close of a hot day, and which continue for the most part of the night. This duty at so important a season the master undertakes himself; and, accordingly, in the simplicity of ancient manners, Boaz, a person of considerable wealth and high rank, laid himself down to sleep on the barn floor, at the end of a heap of barley he had been winnowing.

4. **go in and uncover his feet, and lay thee down** — Singular as these directions may appear to us, there was no impropriety in them, according to the simplicity of rural manners in Bethlehem. In ordinary circumstances these would have seemed indecorous to the world, but in the case of Ruth, it was a method, doubtless, conformable to prevailing usage, of reminding Boaz of the duty which devolved on him as the kinsman of her deceased husband. Boaz probably slept upon a mat or skin; Ruth lay crosswise at his feet — a position in which Eastern servants frequently sleep in the same chamber or tent with their master; and if they want a covering, custom allows them that benefit from part of the covering on their master's bed. Resting, as the Orientals do at night, in the same clothes they wear during the day, there was no indelicacy in a stranger, or even a woman putting the extremity of this cover over her. 9. **I am Ruth, thine handmaid; spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman** — She had already drawn part of the mantle over her; and she asked him now to do it, that the act might become his own. To spread a skirt over one is, in the East, a symbolical action denoting protection. To this day, in many parts of the East, to say of any one that he put his skirt over a woman, is synonymous with saying that he married her; and at all the marriages of the modern Jews and Hindoos, one part of the ceremony is for the bridegroom to put a silken or cotton cloak around his bride. 15. **Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it** — Eastern veils are large sheets — those of ladies being of red silk; but the poorer or common class of women wear them of blue, or blue and white striped linen or cotton. They are wrapped round the head, so as to conceal the whole face except one eye. 17. **six measures of barley** — *Heb.*, six seahs; a seah contained about two gallons and a half, six of which must have been rather a heavy load for a woman.

#### CHAPTER IV.

1-5. **BOAZ CALLS INTO JUDGMENT THE NEXT KINSMAN. 1. Then went Boaz up to the gate of the city** — A roofed building, uninclosed by walls; the place where in ancient times, and in many Eastern towns still, all business transactions are made, and where, therefore, the kinsman was most likely to be found. No preliminaries were necessary in summoning one before the public

assemblage ; no writings, and no delay were required. In a short conversation the matter was stated and arranged — probably in the morning as people went out, or at noon when they returned from the field. 2. **he took ten men of the elders of the city** — As witnesses. In ordinary circumstances, two or three were sufficient to attest a bargain ; but in cases of importance, such as matrimony, divorce, conveyancing of property, it was the Jewish practice to have ten (1 Kings, 21. 8). 3. **Naomi selleth a parcel of land** — *i. e.*, entertains the idea of selling. In her circumstances she was at liberty to part with it (Leviticus, 25. 25). Both Naomi and Ruth had an interest in the land during their lives ; but Naomi alone was mentioned, not only because she directed all the negotiations, but because the introduction of Ruth's name would awaken a suspicion of the necessity of marrying her, before the first proposition was answered. 4. **there is none to redeem it besides thee ; and I am after thee** — See Deuteronomy, 25, 5-10. The redemption of the land of course involved a marriage with Ruth, the widow of the former owner.

6-8. HE REFUSETH THE REDEMPTION. 6. **The kinsman said, I cannot redeem it lest I mar mine own inheritance** — This consequence would follow, either, first, from his having a son by Ruth, who, though heir to the property, would not bear his name ; his name would be extinguished in that of her former husband ; or, secondly, from its having to be subdivided among his other children, which he had probably by a previous marriage. This right, therefore, was renounced and assigned in favour of Boaz, in the way of whose marriage with Ruth the only existing obstacle was now removed. 7, 8. **a man plucked off his shoe** — Where the kinsman refused to perform his duty to the family of his deceased relation, his widow was directed to pull off the shoe, with some attendant circumstances of contemptuous disdain. But, as in this case, there was no refusal, the usual ignominy was spared, and the plucking off the shoe, the only ceremony observed, as a pledge of the transaction being completed.

9-12. HE MARRIES RUTH. 9. **Boaz said unto the elders, Ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's of the hand of Naomi** — Although the widow of Chilion was still living, no regard was paid to her in the disposal of her husband's property. From her remaining in Moab she was considered to have either been married again, or to have renounced all right to an inheritance with the family of Elimelech. 10. **Ruth the Moabiteess have I purchased to be my wife** — This connection Boaz not only might form, since Ruth had embraced the true religion, but he was under a legal necessity of forming it. 11. **all the people and the elders said, We are witnesses** — A multitude, doubtless from curiosity or interest, were present on the occasion. There was no signing of deeds ; yet was the transfer made, and complete security given, by the public manner in which the whole matter was carried on and concluded. **the Lord make the woman that is come unto thine house like Rachel and Leah** — This was the usual bridal benediction. 12. **let thy house be like the house of Pharez** — *i. e.*, as honourable and numerous as his. He was the

ancestor of the Bethlehem people, and his family one of the five from which the tribe of Judah sprang.

**13-18. SHE BEARS OBED.** 17. **Obed** — means “servant.” 18-22. **these are the generations of Pharez** — *i. e.*, his descendants. This appendix shows that the special object contemplated by the inspired author of this little book was to preserve the memory of an interesting domestic episode, and to trace the genealogy of David. There was an interval of 380 years between Salmon and David. It is evident that whole generations are omitted; the leading personages only are named, and grand-fathers are said, in Scripture language, to beget their grand-children, without specifying the intermediate links.

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**LONG-EARED SYRIAN GOAT.**



THE  
FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CHAPTER I.

**1-8. OF ELKANAH AND HIS TWO WIVES. 1. a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim**—The first word being in the dual number signifies the double city—the old and new town of Ramah (*v.* 19). There were five cities of this name, all on high ground. This city had the addition of Zophim attached to it, because it was founded by Zuph, “an Ephrathite,” that is, a native of Ephratha. Bethlehem, and the expression of Ramathaim-zophim must, therefore, be understood as Ramah in the land of Zuph, in the hill country of Ephratha. Others, considering “Mount Ephraim” as pointing to the locality in Joseph’s territory, regard “Zophim” not as a proper but a common noun, signifying watch towers, or watchmen, with reference either to the height of its situation, or its being the residence of prophets who were watchmen (Ezekiel, 3. 17). Though a native of Ephratha or Bethlehem-judah (Ruth, 1. 2). **Elkanah** was a Levite (1 Chronicles, 6. 33, 34); and though of this order, and a good man, practiced polygamy, which, though contrary to the original law, seems to have been prevalent among the Hebrews in those days, when there was no king in Israel, and every man did what seemed right in his own eyes. **3. this man went up out of his city yearly to worship in Shiloh**—In that place was the “earth’s one sanctuary,” and thither he repaired at the three solemn feasts, accompanied by his family at one of them—probably the passover. Although a Levite, he could not personally offer a sacrifice—that was exclusively the office of the priests; and his piety in maintaining a regular attendance on the divine ordinances is the more worthy of notice, that the character of the two priests who administered them was notoriously bad. But doubtless he believed, and acted on the belief, that the ordinances were “effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in those who administered them, but from the grace of God being communicated through them.” **4. when Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah &c., . . . portions**—The offerer received back the greater part of the peace offerings, which he and his family or friends were accustomed to eat at a social feast before the Lord (see Leviticus, 3. 7; Deuteronomy, 12. 12). It was out of these consecrated viands Elkanah gave portions to all the members of his family; but **unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, i. e.,** a larger choice, according to the Eastern fashion of showing regard to beloved or distinguished guests (see ch. 9. 23, 24; also Genesis, 43. 34). **6. her adversary provoked her sore**—The conduct of Peninnah was most unbecoming. But domestic broils in the houses of polygamists are of frequent occurrence, and the most fruitful cause of

them has always been jealousy of the husband's superior affection, as in this case of Hannah.

**9-18. HANNAH'S PRAYER. 9-11. she prayed, and vowed a vow**—Here is a specimen of the intense desire that reigned in the bosoms of the Hebrew women for children. This was the burden of Hannah's prayer; and the strong preference she expressed for a male child originated in her purpose of dedicating him to the tabernacle service. The circumstance of his birth bound him to this; but his residence within the precincts of the sanctuary would have to commence at an earlier age than usual, in consequence of the Nazarite vow. **12-18. Eli marked her mouth**—The suspicion of the aged priest seems to indicate that the vice of intemperance was neither uncommon nor confined to one sex in those times of disorder. This mistaken impression was immediately removed; and in the words, "God grant," or rather, "will grant," was followed by an invocation which, as Hannah regarded it in the light of a prophecy pointing to the accomplishment of her earnest desire, dispelled her sadness, and filled her with confident hope. The character and services of the expected child were sufficiently important to make his birth a fit subject for prophecy.

**20. SAMUEL BORN. 20. called his name Samuel**—Doubtless with her husband's consent. The names of children were given sometimes by the fathers, and sometimes by the mothers (see Genesis, 4. 1, 26; 5. 29; 19. 37; 21. 3); and among the early Hebrews, were commonly compound names, one part including the name of God. **21. the man Elkanah... went up to offer... his vow**—The solemn expression of his concurrence in Hannah's vow was necessary to make it obligatory (see Numbers, 30). **22. But Hannah went not up**—Men only were obliged to attend the solemn feasts (Exodus, 23, 17). But Hannah, like other pious women, was in the habit of going, only she deemed it more prudent and becoming to defer her next journey till her son's age would enable her to fulfil her vow. **24. three bullocks**—*Sept.* renders it "a bullock of three years old," which is, probably, the true rendering.

## CHAPTER II.

**I-II. HANNAH'S SONG IN THANKFULNESS TO GOD. I. Hannah prayed, and said**—Praise and prayer are inseparably conjoined in Scripture (Colossians, 4. 2; I Timothy, 2. 1). This beautiful song was her tribute of thanks for the divine goodness in answering her petition. **mine horn is exalted in the Lord**—Allusion is here made to a peculiarity in the dress of Eastern females about Lebanon, which seems to have obtained anciently among the Israelite women, that of wearing a tin or silver horn on the forehead, on which their veil is suspended. Wives, who have no children, wear it projecting in an oblique direction, while those who become mothers forthwith raise it a few inches higher, inclining toward the perpendicular, and, by this slight but observable change in their head-dress, make known, wherever they go, the maternal character which they now bear. **5. they that were hun-**

**gry ceased**—*i. e.*, to hunger. **the barren hath born seven**—*i. e.*, many children. 6. **he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up**—*i. e.*, he reduces to the lowest state of degradation and misery, and restores to prosperity and happiness. 8. **inherit the throne of glory**—*i. e.*, possess seats of honour. **he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dung-hill**—The dunghill, a pile of horse, cow, or camel offal, heaped up to dry in the sun, and serve as fuel, was, and is, one of the common haunts of the poorest mendicants; and the change that had been made in the social position of Hannah, appeared to her grateful heart as auspicious and as great as the elevation of a poor despised beggar to the highest and most dignified rank. 10. **the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, . . . exalt the horn of his anointed**—This is the first place in Scripture where the word "anointed," or Mesiah, occurs; and as there was no king in Israel at the time, it seems the best interpretation to refer it to Christ. There is, indeed, a remarkable resemblance between the song of Hannah and that of Mary (Luke, I. 46). 11. **the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest**—He must have been engaged in some occupation suited to his tender age, as in playing upon the cymbals, or other instruments of music; in lighting the lamps, or similar easy and interesting services.

12-17. **THE SIN OF ELI'S SONS.** 12. **Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial**—Not only careless and irreligious, but men loose in their actions, and vicious and scandalous in their habits. Though professionally engaged in sacred duties, they were not only strangers to the power of religion in the heart, but they had thrown off its restraints, and even ran, as is often done in similar cases by the sons of eminent ministers, to the opposite extreme of reckless and open profligacy. 13. **the priest's custom with the people**—When persons wished to present a sacrifice of peace-offering on the altar, the offering was brought in the first instance to the priest, and as the Lord's part was burnt, the parts appropriated respectively to the priests and offerers were to be sodden. But Eli's sons, unsatisfied with the breast and shoulder, which were the perquisites appointed to them by the divine law (Exodus, 29. 27; Leviticus, 7. 31, 32), not only claimed part of the offerer's share, but rapaciously seized them previous to the sacred ceremony of heaving or waving (see Leviticus, 7. 34); and moreover committed the additional injustice of taking up with their fork those portions which they preferred, while raw, in order to their being roasted. Pious people were revolted by such rapacious and profane encroachments on the dues of the altar, as well as what should have gone to constitute the family and social feast of the offerer. The truth is, the priests having become haughty and unwilling in many instances to accept invitations to those feasts, presents of meat were sent to them; and this, though done in courtesy at first, being, in course of time, established into a right, gave rise to all the rapacious keenness of Eli's sons.

18-26. **SAMUEL'S MINISTRY.** 18. **But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child**—This notice of his early services in the outer courts of the tabernacle, was made to pave the way for

the remarkable prophecy regarding the high priest's family. **girded with a linen ephod**—A small shoulder garment or apron, used in the sacred service by the inferior priests and Levites; sometimes also by judges or eminent persons, and hence allowed to Samuel, who, though not a Levite, was devoted to God from his birth. 19. **his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year**—Aware that he could not yet render any useful service to the tabernacle, she undertook the expense of supplying him with wearing apparel. All weaving stuffs, manufacture of cloth and making of suits, were anciently the employment of women. 20. **Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife**—This blessing, like that which he had formerly pronounced, had a prophetic virtue, which, ere long, appeared in the increase of Hannah's family (*v.* 21), and the growing qualifications of Samuel for the service of the sanctuary. 22. **the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle**. This was an institution of holy women of a strictly ascetic order, who had relinquished worldly cares and devoted themselves to the Lord; an institution which continued down to the time of Christ (Luke 2. 37). Eli was, on the whole, a good man, but unhappy in the moral and religious training of his family. He erred on the side of parental indulgence, and though he reprimanded them (see Deuteronomy, 21, 18-21), yet, from fear or indolence, shrunk from laying on them the restraints, or subjecting them to the discipline their gross delinquencies called for. In his judicial capacity he winked at their flagrant acts of mal-administration, and suffered them to make reckless encroachments on the constitution, by which the most serious injuries were inflicted, both on the rights of the people and the laws of God. 25. **they harkened not unto the voice of their father, because, it should be therefore, the Lord would slay them**—It was not God's pre-ordination, but their own willful and impenitent disobedience which was the cause of their destruction.

27-35. A PROPHECY AGAINST ELI'S HOUSE. 27. **there came a man of God unto Eli, saying, . . . there shall not be an old man in thine house**—So much importance has always, in the East, been attached to old age, that it would be felt to be a great calamity, and sensibly lower the respectability of any family, which could boast of few or no old men. The prediction of this prophet was fully confirmed by the afflictions, degradation, poverty, and many untimely deaths with which the house of Eli was visited after its announcement (see ch. 4. 11; 14. 3; 22. 18-23; 1 Kings, 2. 27). 31. **I will cut off thine arm and the arm of thy father's house**—By the withdrawal of the high priesthood from Eleazar, the elder of Aaron's two sons, after Nadab and Abihu were destroyed, that dignity had been conferred on the family of Ithamar, to which Eli belonged, and now that his descendants had forfeited the honour, it was to be taken from them and restored to the elder branch. 32. **thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation**—A successful rival for the office of high priest shall rise out of another family (2 Samuel, 15. 35; 1 Chronicles, 24, 3; 29. 22). But the marginal reading, "thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle," seems to be a preferable translation.

## CHAPTER III.

**1-10. THE LORD APPEARS TO SAMUEL IN A VISION. 1. the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli**—His ministry consisted, of course, of such duties in or about the sanctuary as were suited to his age, which is supposed now to have been about twelve years. Whether the office had been specially assigned him, or it arose from the interest inspired by the story of his birth, Eli kept him as his immediate attendant; and he resided not *in* the sanctuary, but in one of the tents or apartments around it, assigned for the accommodation of the priests and Levites, *his* being near to that of the high priest's. **the word of the Lord was precious in those days**—It was very rarely known to the Israelites; and in point of fact only two prophets are mentioned as having appeared during the whole administration of the Judges (Judges, 4. 4; 6. 8). **there was no open vision**—No publicly recognized prophet whom the people could consult, and from whom they might learn the will of God. There must have been certain indubitable evidences by which a communication from heaven could be distinguished. Eli knew them, for he may have received them, though not so frequently as is implied in the idea of an "open vision." **3. ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord**—The "temple" seems to have become the established designation of the tabernacle, and the time indicated was toward the morning twilight, as the lamps were extinguished at sun-rise (see Leviticus, 6. 12, 13). **5. he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me**—It is evident that his sleeping chamber was close to that of the aged high priest, and that he was accustomed to be called during the night. The three successive calls addressed to the boy convinced Eli of the divine character of the speaker, and he therefore exhorted the child to give a reverential attention to the message. The burden of it was an extraordinary premonition of the judgments that impended over Eli's house; and the aged priest, having drawn the painful secret from the simple child, exclaimed, **It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth to Him good**—Such is the spirit of meek and un murmuring submission in which we ought to receive the dispensations of God, however severe and afflictive. But, in order to form a right estimate of Eli's language and conduct on this occasion, we must consider the overwhelming accumulation of judgments denounced against his person, his sons, his descendants—his altar, and nation. With such a threatening prospect before him, his piety and meekness were wonderful. In his personal character he seems to have been a good man, but his relative conduct was flagrantly bad; and though his misfortunes claim our sympathy, it is impossible to approve or defend the weak and unfaithful course which, in the retributive justice of God, brought these adversities upon him.

## CHAPTER IV.

**.-II. ISRAEL OVERCOME BY THE PHILISTINES. I. The word of Samuel came to all Israel**—The character of Samuel as a prophet was now fully established. The want of an “open vision” was supplied by him, for “none of his words were let fall to the ground” (ch. 3. 19); and to his residence in Shiloh all the people of Israel repaired, to consult him as an oracle, who, as the medium of receiving the divine command, or by his gift of a prophet, could inform them what was the mind of God. It is not improbable that the rising influence of the young prophet had alarmed the jealous fears of the Philistines, who having kept the Israelites in some degree of subjection ever since the death of Samson, were determined, by a farther crushing, to prevent the possibility of their being trained by the counsels, and under the leadership of Samuel, to re-assert their national independence. At all events, the Philistines were the aggressors (*v.* 2). But, on the other hand, the Israelites were rash and inconsiderate in rushing to the field without obtaining the sanction of Samuel as to the war, or having consulted him as to the subsequent measures they took. **Israel went out against the Philistines to battle**—*i. e.*, to resist this new incursion.—**Aphek . . . Ebenezer**—Aphek, which means “strength,” is a name applied to any fort or fastness. There were several Apheks in Palestine; but the mention of Eben-ezer determines this “Aphek” to be in the south, among the mountains of Judah—near the western entrance of the pass of Beth-horon, and consequently on the borders of the Philistine territory. The first encounter at Aphek being unsuccessful, the Israelites determined to renew the engagement in better circumstances. 3-9. **Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us**—Strange that they were so blind to the real cause of the disaster, and that they did not discern, in the great and general corruption of religion and morals (ch. 2. and 7. 3; Psalm, 78. 58), the reason why the presence and aid of God were not extended to them. Their first measure for restoring the national spirit and energy ought to have been a complete reformation—a universal return to purity of worship and manners. But, instead of cherishing a spirit of deep humiliation and sincere repentance—instead of resolving on the abolition of existing abuses, and the re-establishing of the pure faith, they adopted what appeared an easier and speedier course—they put their trust in ceremonial observances, and doubted not but that the introduction of the ark into the battle-field would insure their victory. In recommending this extraordinary step, the elders might recollect the confidence it imparted to their ancestors (Numbers, 10. 35; 14. 44), as well as what had been done at Jericho. But it is more probable that they were influenced by the heathenish ideas of their idolatrous neighbours, who carried their idol Dagon, or his sacred symbols, to their wars, believing that the power of those divinities was inseparably associated with, or residing in, their images. In short, the shout raised in the Hebrew camp, on the arrival of the ark, indicated very plainly

the prevalence among the Israelites at this time, of a belief in national deities—whose influence was local, and whose interest was especially exerted in behalf of the people who adored them. The joy of the Israelites was an emotion springing out of the same superstitious sentiments as the corresponding dismay of their enemies; and to afford them a convincing, though painful proof of their error, was the ulterior object of the discipline to which they were now subjected—a discipline by which God, while punishing them for their apostacy by allowing the capture of the ark, had another end in view—that of signally vindicating His Supremacy over all the gods of the nations.

**12-22. ELI HEARING THE TIDINGS.** 13. **Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side**—The aged priest, as a public magistrate, used, in dispensing justice, to seat himself daily in a spacious recess at the entrance gate of the city; and, in his intense anxiety to learn the issue of the battle, he took up his usual place as the most convenient for meeting with passers-by. His seat was an official chair, similar to those of the ancient Egyptian judges, richly carved, superbly ornamented, high, and *without a back*. The calamities announced to Samuel as about to fall upon the family of Eli were now inflicted, in the death of his two sons, and after his death by that of his daughter-in-law, whose infant son received a name that perpetuated the fallen glory of the church and nation. The public disaster was completed by the capture of the ark. Poor Eli! he was a good man, in spite of his unhappy weakness. So strongly were his sensibilities enlisted on the side of religion, that the news of the capture of the ark proved to him a knell of death; and yet his over-indulgence, or sad neglect of his family—the main cause of all the evils that led to its fall, has been recorded, as a beacon to warn all heads of Christian families against making shipwreck on the same rock.

## CHAPTER V.

**1, 2. THE PHILISTINES BRING THE ARK INTO THE HOUSE OF DAGON.** 1. **Ashdod**—Or Azotus, one of the five Philistine satrapies, and a place of great strength. It was an inland town, thirty-four miles north of Gaza, now called Esdud. 2. **the house of Dagon**—Stately temples were erected in honour of this idol, who was the principal deity of the Philistines, but whose worship extended over all Syria, as well as Mesopotamia and Chaldea; his name being found among the Assyrian gods on the cuneiform inscriptions. [RAWLINSON.] He was represented under a monstrous combination of a human head, breast, and arms, joined to the belly and tail of a fish. The captured ark was placed in the temple of Dagon, right before this image of the idol.

**3-5. DAGON FALLS DOWN.** 3. **they of Ashdod arose early**—They were filled with consternation when they found the object of their stupid veneration prostrate before the symbol of the Divine presence; though set up, it fell again, and lay in a state of complete mutilation; his head and arms, severed from the trunk, were

lying in distant and separate places, as if violently cast off, and only the fishy part remained. The degradation of their idol, though concealed by the priests on the former occasion, was now more manifest and infamous. He lay in the attitude of a vanquished enemy and a suppliant, and this picture of humiliation significantly declared the superiority of the God of Israel. 5. **Therefore neither the priests...nor any...tread on the threshold of Dagon**—A superstitious ceremony crept in, and in the providence of God was continued, by which the Philistines contributed to publish this proof of the helplessness of their god. **unto this day**—The usage continued in practice at the time when this history was written—probably in the later years of Samuel's life.

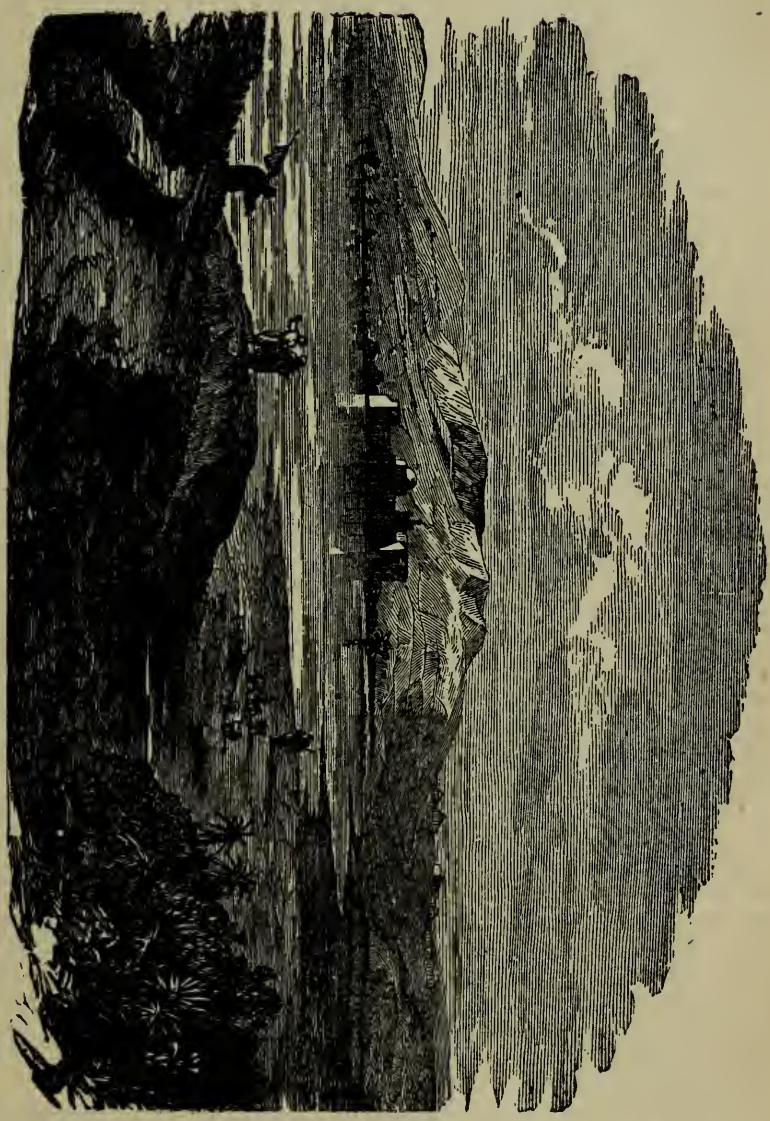
6-12. **THE PHILISTINES ARE SMITTEN WITH EMERODS.** 6. **the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod**—The presumption of the Ashdodites was punished by a severe judgment that overtook them in the form of a pestilence. **smote them with emerods**—Bleeding piles, hæmorrhoids (Psalm 78. 66) in a very aggravated form. As the heathens generally regarded diseases affecting the secret parts of the body as punishments from the gods for trespasses committed against themselves, the Ashdodites would be the more ready to look upon the prevailing epidemic as demonstrating the anger of God, already shown against their idol. 7. **the ark of God shall not abide with us**—It was removed successively to several of the large towns of the country, but the same pestilence broke out in every place, and raged so fiercely and fatally that the authorities were forced to send the ark back into the land of Israel. 11. **they sent**—*i. e.*, the magistrates of Ekron. 12. **the cry of the city went up to heaven**—The disease is attended with acute pain, and it is far from being a rare phenomenon in the Philistian plain. [VAN DE VELDE.]

## CHAPTER VI.

1-9. **THE PHILISTINES COUNSEL HOW TO SEND BACK THE ARK.** 1. **the ark was in the country of the Philistines seven months**—Notwithstanding the calamities which its presence had brought on the country and the people, the Philistine lords were unwilling to relinquish such a prize, and tried every means to retain it with peace and safety, but in vain. 2. **The Philistines called for the priests and the diviners**—The designed restoration of the ark was not, it seems, universally approved of, and many doubts were expressed whether the prevailing pestilence was really a judgment of heaven. The priests and diviners united all parties by recommending a course which would enable them easily to discriminate the true character of the calamities, and at the same time to propitiate the incensed deity for any acts of disrespect which might have been shown to His ark. **five golden emerods**—Votive or thank-offerings were commonly made by the heathen in prayer for, or gratitude after, deliverance from lingering or dangerous disorders, in the form of metallic (generally silver) models or images of the diseased parts of the body. This is common still in



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Ashdod.



Roman Catholic countries, as well as in the temples of the Hindus and other modern heathen. **five golden mice**—This animal is supposed by some to be the jerboa or jumping-mouse of Syria and Egypt [BOCHART]; by others, to be the short-tailed field-mouse, which often swarms in prodigious numbers, and commits great ravages in the cultivated fields of Palestine. 5. **give glory to the God of Israel**—By these propitiatory presents, the Philistines would acknowledge His power; and make reparation for the injury done to His ark. **lighten his hand . . . from off your gods**—Elohim for god. 6. **Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened theirs**—The memory of the appalling judgments that had been inflicted on Egypt was not yet obliterated. Whether preserved in written records, or in floating tradition, they were still fresh in the minds of men, and being extensively spread, were doubtless the means of diffusing the knowledge and fear of the true God. 7. **make a new cart**—Their object in making a new one for the purpose seems to have been not only for cleanliness and neatness, but from an impression that there would have been an impropriety in using one that had been applied to meaner or more common services. It appears to have been a covered wagon (see 2 Samuel, 6. 3). **two milch kine**—Such untrained heifers, wanton and vagrant, would pursue no certain and regular path, like those accustomed to the yoke, and therefore were most unlikely of their own spontaneous motion to prosecute the direct road to the land of Israel. **bring their calves home from them**—The strong natural affection of the dams might be supposed to stimulate their return homeward, rather than direct their steps in a foreign country. 8. **take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart**—This mode of carrying the sacred symbol was forbidden; but the ignorance of the Philistines made the indignity be overlooked (see 2 Samuel, 6. 6). **put the jewels . . . in a coffer by the side thereof**—The way of securing treasure in the East is still in a chest, chained to the house wall or some solid part of the furniture. 9. **Beth-shemesh**—*i. e.*, “house of the Sun,” now Ain Shems [ROBINSON], a city of the priests in Judah, in the south-east border of Dan, lying in a beautiful and extensive valley. Josephus says they were set a-going near a place where the road divided into two—the one leading back to Ekron, where were their calves, and the other to Beth-shemesh. Their frequent lowings attested their ardent longing for their young, and at the same time the supernatural influence that controlled their movements in a contrary direction. **the lords of the Philistines went after them**—to give their tribute of homage—to prevent imposture, and to obtain the most reliable evidence of the truth. The result of this journey tended to their own deeper humiliation, and the greater illustration of God’s glory. 14. **they clave**—*i. e.*, the Bethshemites, in an irrepressible outburst of joy. **offered the kine**—Though contrary to the requirements of the law (Leviticus, 1. 3; 22. 19), these animals might properly be offered, as consecrated by God himself; and though not beside the tabernacle, there were many instances of sacrifices offered by prophets and

holy men on extraordinary occasions in other places. 17. **these are the golden emerods... and the mice**—There were five representative images of the emerods, corresponding to the five principal cities of the Philistines. But the number of the golden mice must have been greater, for they were sent from the walled towns as well as the country villages. 18. **on the great stone of Abel**—*Abel* or *Aben* means "stone," so that, without resorting to *italics*, the reading should be, "the great stone." 19. **he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark**—In the ecstasy of delight at seeing the return of the ark, the Beth-shemesh reapers pried into it beneath the wagon cover; and instead of covering it up again, as a sacred utensil, they let it remain exposed to common inspection, wishing it to be seen, in order that all might enjoy the triumph of seeing the votive offerings presented to it, and gratify curiosity with the sight of the sacred shrine. This was the offense of those Israelites (Levites as well as common people) who had treated the ark with less reverence than the Philistines themselves. **he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men**—Beth-shemesh being only a village, this translation *must* be erroneous, and should be, "he smote fifty out of a thousand," being only 1,400 in all who indulged this curiosity. God, instead of decimating, according to an ancient usage, slew only a 20th part; *i. e.*, according to Josephus, 70 out of 1,400 (see Numbers, 4. 18-22). 21. **Kirjath-jearim**—"the city of woods," called also Kirjath-baal (Joshua, 15. 60; 18. 14; 1 Chronicles, 13. 6, 7). This was the nearest town to Beth-shemesh, and, being a place of strength, was a fitter place for the residence of the ark. Beth-shemesh being in a low plain, and Kirjath-jearim on a hill, explains the message, "Come ye down, and fetch it up to you."

## CHAPTER VII.

1-2. THE ARK AT KIRJATH-JEARIM. 1. **the men of Kirjath-jearim**—"The city of woods," also Kirth-Baal (Joshua, 15. 60; 18. 14; 1 Chronicles, 13. 5, 6). This was the nearest town to Beth-shemesh, and stood on a hill; this was the reason of the message (ch. 6. 21); and why this was chosen for the convenience of people turning their faces to the ark (1 Kings, 8. 29-35; Psalm 28. 2; Daniel, 6. 10). **they brought it into the house of Abinadab**—Why it was not transported at once to Shiloh, where the Tabernacle and sacred vessels were remaining, is difficult to conjecture. **sanctified his son**—he was not a Levite, and was therefore only set apart, or appointed to be keeper of the place. 2. **the ark abode twenty years in Kirjath-jearim**—It appears, in the subsequent history, that a much longer period elapsed before its final removal from Kirjath-jearim (2 Samuel, 6; 1 Chronicles, 13). But that length of time had passed when the Israelites began to revive from their sad state of religious decline. The capture of the ark had produced a general indifference either to its loss or its recovery. **all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord**—They were

then brought, doubtless by the influence of Samuel's exhortations, to renounce idolatry, and return to the national worship of the true God.

**3-6. THE ISRAELITES, BY SAMUEL'S MEANS, SOLEMNLY REPENT AT MISPEH.** 3-6. **Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel**—great national reformation was effected through the influence of Samuel. Disgusted with their foreign servitude, and panting for the restoration of liberty and independence, they were open to salutary impressions; and, convinced of their errors, they renounced idolatry, and the re-establishment of the faith of their fathers was inaugurated at a great public meeting held at Mizpeh, in Judah, and hallowed by the observance of impressive religious solemnities. The "drawing water and pouring it out before the Lord," seems to have been a symbolical act by which, in the people's name, Samuel testified their sense of national corruption—their need of that moral purification of which water is the emblem, and their sincere desire to pour out their hearts in repentance before God. **Samuel judged Israel in Mizpeh**—At the time of Eli's death he could not have much exceeded twenty years of age; and, although his character and position must have given him great influence, it does not appear that hitherto he had done more than prophets were wont to do. Now he entered on the duties of a civil magistrate.

**7-14. WHILE SAMUEL PRAYS, THE PHILISTINES ARE DISCOMFITED.** 7. **when the Philistines heard, &c.**—The character and importance of the national convention at Mizpeh were fully appreciated by the Philistines. They discerned in it the rising spirit of religious patriotism among the Israelites that was prepared to throw off the yoke of their domination; and anxious to crush it at the first, they made a sudden incursion while the Israelites were in the midst of their solemn celebration. Unprepared for resistance, they besought Samuel to supplicate the Divine interposition to save them from their enemies. The prophet's prayers and sacrifice were answered by such a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, that the assailants, panic-struck, were disordered and fled. The Israelites, recognizing the hand of God, rushed courageously on the foe they had so much dreaded, and committed such immense havoc, that the Philistines did not for long recover from this disastrous blow. This brilliant victory secured peace and independence to Israel for twenty years, as well as the restitution of the usurped territory. 12. **Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen**—on an open spot between the town and "the crag" (some well-known rock in the neighbourhood). A huge stone pillar was erected as a monument of their victory (Leviticus, 26. 1). The name—**Eben-ezer**—is thought to have been written on the face of it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1-18. BY THE OCCASION OF THE ILL GOVERNMENT OF SAMUEL'S SONS THE ISRAELITES ASK A KING. I. when Samuel was old**—He was now about fifty-four years of age, having discharged the office of sole judge for twelve years. Unable, from growing infirmities, to prosecute his circuit journeys through the country, he at length confined his magisterial duties to Ramah and its neighbourhood; delegating to his sons as his deputies (ch. 7. 15) the administration of justice in the southern district of Palestine, their provincial court being held at Beer-sheba. The young men, however, did not inherit the high qualities of their father; and they having corrupted the fountains of justice for their own private aggrandizement, a deputation of the leading men in the country lodged a complaint against them in headquarters, accompanied with a formal demand for a change in the government. The limited and occasional authority of the judges, the disunion and jealousy of the tribes under the administration of those rulers, had been creating a desire for a united and permanent form of government; while the advanced age of Samuel, together with the risk of his death happening in the then unsettled state of the people, was the occasion of calling forth an expression of this desire now.

**6. the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us**—Personal and family feelings might affect his views of this public movement. But his dissatisfaction arose principally from the proposed change being revolutionary in its character. Though it would not entirely subvert their theocratic government, the appointment of a visible monarch would necessarily tend to throw out of view their unseen King and Head. God intimated, through Samuel, that their request would, in anger, be granted, while at the same time he apprised them of some of the evils that would result from their choice.

**11. this will be the manner of the king**—The following is a very just and graphic picture of the despotic governments which anciently and still are found in the East, and into conformity with which the Hebrew monarchy, notwithstanding the restrictions prescribed by the law, gradually slid.

**He will take your sons and appoint them for himself**—Oriental sovereigns claim a right to the services of any of their subjects at pleasure. **some shall run before his chariots**—The royal equipages were, generally throughout the East, as in Persia they still are, preceded and accompanied by a number of attendants who run on foot.

**12. He will appoint him captains**—In the East, a person must accept any office to which he may be nominated by the king, however irksome it may be to his taste, or ruinous to his interests.

**13. He will take your daughters to be confectionaries**—Cookery, baking and the kindred works are, in Eastern countries, female employment, and thousands of young women are occupied with these offices in the palaces even of petty princes.

**14-18. He will take your fields, &c.**—The circumstances mentioned here might be illustrated by exact analogies in the conduct of many Oriental monarchs in the present day. **19-22. Neverthe-**

less the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel — They sneered at Samuel's description as a bugbear to frighten them. Determined, at all hazards, to gain their object, they insisted on being made like all the other nations, though it was their glory and happiness to be unlike other nations in having the Lord for their King and Lawgiver (Numbers, 23. 9; Deuteronomy, 33. 28). Their demand was conceded, for the government of a king had been provided for in the law, and they were dismissed to wait the appointment which God had reserved to Himself (Deuteronomy, 17. 14-20).

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-4. SAUL DESPAIRING TO FIND HIS FATHER'S ASSES, COMES TO SAMUEL.** 1. **a mighty man of power** — *i. e.*, of great wealth and substance. The family was of high consideration in the tribe of Benjamin, and therefore Saul's words must be set down among the common forms of affected humility, which Oriental people are wont to use. 2. **Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly** — He had a presence; for it is evident that he must have been only a little under seven feet high. A gigantic stature, and an athletic frame must have been a popular recommendation at that time in that country. 3. **The asses of Saul's father were lost; and Kish said to Saul, Arise, go seek the asses** — The probability is, that the family of Kish, according to the immemorial usage of Oriental shepherds in the purely pastoral regions, had let the animals roam at large during the grazing season, at the close of which messengers were dispatched in search of them. Such traveling searches are common; and, as each owner has his own stamp marked on his cattle, the mention of it to the shepherds he meets gradually leads to the discovery of the strayed animals. This ramble of Saul's had nothing extraordinary in it, except its *superior* directions and issue, which turned its uncertainty into certainty. 4. 5. **he passed through Mount Ephraim** — This being situated on the north of Benjamin, indicates the direction of Saul's journey. The district explored means the whole of the mountainous region, with its valleys and defiles, which belonged to Ephraim. Turning apparently southward, probably through the verdant hills between Shiloh and the vales of Jordan (Shalisha and Shalim), he approached again the borders of Benjamin, scoured the land of Zuph, and was proposing to return, when his servant recollected that they were in the immediate neighbourhood of the man of God, who would give them counsel. 6. **there is, in this city, a man of God** — Ramah was the usual residence of Samuel, but several circumstances, especially the mention of Rachael's sepulchre, which lay in Saul's way homeward, lead to the conclusion that "this city" was not the Ramah where Samuel dwelt. **peradventure he can show us our way that we should go** — It seems strange that a dignified prophet should be consulted in such an affair. But it is probable that at the introduction of the prophetic office the seers had discovered things lost or stolen, and thus their power for higher

revelations was gradually established. 7. **Saul said to his servant, Behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man?**—According to Eastern notions, it would be considered a want of respect for any person to go into the presence of a superior man of rank or of official station, without a present of some kind in his hand, however trifling in value. **the bread is spent in our vessels**—Shepherds, going in quest of their cattle, put up in a bag as much flour for making bread as will last sometimes for thirty days. It appears that Saul thought of giving the man of God a cake from his traveling bag, and this would have been sufficient to render the indispensable act of civility—the customary tribute to official dignity. 8. **the fourth part of a shekel of silver**—rather more than sixpence. Contrary to our Western notions, money is, in the East, the most acceptable form in which a present can be made to a man of rank. 9. **seer . . . prophet**—The recognized distinction in latter times was, that a seer was one who was favoured with visions of God—a view of things invisible to mortal sight; and a prophet foretold future events. 11. **as they went up the hill**—The modern village Er-Rameh lies on an eminence; and on their way they met a band of young maidens going out to the well, which, like all similar places in Palestine, was beyond the precincts of the town. From these damsels they learned that the day was devoted to a festival occasion, in honour of which Samuel had arrived in the city—that a sacrifice had been offered, which was done by prophets in extraordinary circumstances, at a distance from the tabernacle, and that a feast was to follow—implying that it had been a peace-offering, and that, according to the venerable practice of the Israelites, the man of God was expected to ask a special blessing on the food in a manner becoming the high occasion. 14. **Samuel came out against them, to go to the high place**—Such were the simple manners of the times, that this prophet, the chief man in Israel, was seen going to preside at a high festival, undistinguished either by his dress or equipage from any ordinary citizen.

15-27. **GOD REVEALS TO SAMUEL SAUL'S COMING AND HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE KINGDOM.** 15. **Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before**—The description of Saul, the time of his arrival, and the high office to which he was destined, had been secretly intimated to Samuel from heaven. The future king of Israel was to fight the battles of the Lord, and protect His people. It would appear that they were, at this time, suffering great molestation from the Philistines, and that this was an additional reason of their urgent demands for the appointment of a king (see ch. 10. 5; 13. 3). 18. **Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is?**—Satisfying the stranger's inquiry, Samuel invited him to the feast, as well as to sojourn till the morrow; and, in order to reconcile him to the delay, assured him that the strayed asses had been recovered. 20. **on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on thy father's house**—This was a covered and indirect premonition of the royal dignity that awaited him; and though Saul's answer shows that he fully understood it, he affected to doubt that the prophet was in earnest. 21. **And Saul answered and said, Am**



not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, &c. — By selecting a king from this least and nearly extinct tribe (Judges, 20), divine wisdom designed to remove all grounds of jealousy among the other tribes. 22. **Samuel took Saul, and brought him into the parlour** — the toil-worn, but noble looking traveler found himself suddenly seated among the principal men of the place, and treated as the most distinguished guest. 24. **The cook took up the shoulder, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left, set it before thee and eat** — *i. e.*, reserved (see Genesis, 18. 6 ; 43. 34). This was, most probably, the right shoulder ; which, as the perquisite of the sacrifice, belonged to Samuel, and which he had set aside for his expected guest. In the sculptures of the Egyptian shambles, also, the first joint taken off was always the right shoulder for the priest. The meaning of those distinguished attentions must have been understood by the other guests. 25. **Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house** — Saul was taken to lodge with the prophet for that night. Before retiring to rest they communed on the flat roof of the house, the couch being laid there (Joshua, 2. 6), when, doubtless, Samuel revealed the secret, and described the peculiar duties of a monarch in a nation so related to the Divine King as Israel. Next morning, early, Samuel roused his guest, and conveying him on his way toward the skirts of the city, sought before parting a *private* interview — the object of which is narrated in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

**1-27. SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL, AND CONFIRMS HIM BY THE PREDICTION OF THREE SIGNS.** 1. **Then Samuel took a vial of oil** — This was the ancient (Judges, 9. 8) ceremony of investiture with the royal office among the Hebrews and other Eastern nations. But there were two unctions to the kingly office ; the one in private, by a prophet (ch. 16. 13), which was meant to be only a prophetic intimation of the person attaining that high dignity — the more public and informal inauguration (2 Samuel, 2. 4 ; 5. 3) was performed by the high priest, and perhaps with the holy oil, but that is not certain. The first of a dynasty was thus anointed, but not his heirs, unless the succession was disputed (1 Kings, 1. 39 ; 2 Kings, 11. 12 ; 23. 30 ; 2 Chronicles, 23. 11) ; **kissed him** — This salutation, as explained by the words that accompanied it, was an act of respectful homage, a token of congratulation to the new king (Psalm 2. 12). 2. **when thou art departed from me to-day** — The design of these specific predictions of what should be met with on the way, and the number and minuteness of which would arrest attention, was to confirm Saul's reliance on the prophetic character of Samuel, and lead him to give full credence to what had been revealed to him as the word of God. **Rachel's sepulchre** — Near Bethlehem (see Genesis, 35. 16). **Zelzah** — Or Zelah, now *Bet-Jalah*, in the neighbourhood of that town. 3. **the plain** — Or the oak of Tabor, not the cele-

brated mount—for that was far distant. **three men going up to God to Bethel**—Apparently to offer sacrifices there at a time when the ark and the tabernacle were not in a settled abode, and God had not yet declared the permanent place which he should choose. The kids were for sacrifice, the loaves for the offering, and the wine for the libations. 5. **the hill of God**—Probably Geba (ch. 13. 3), so called from a school of the prophets being established there. The company of prophets were, doubtless, the pupils at this seminary, which had probably been instituted by Samuel, and in which the chief branches of education taught were a knowledge of the law, and of psalmody with instrumental music, which is called “prophesying” (here and in 1 Chronicles, 25, 1, 7). 6. **the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee**—*lit.*, rush upon thee, suddenly endowing thee with a capacity and disposition to act in a manner far superior to thy previous character and habits, and, instead of the simplicity, ignorance and sheepishness of a peasant, thou wilt display an energy, wisdom and magnanimity worthy of a prince. 8. **thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal**—This, according to Josephus, was to be a standing rule for the observance of Saul while the prophet and he lived; that in every great crisis, as a hostile incursion on the country, he should repair to Gilgal, where he was to remain seven days, to afford time for the tribes on both sides of the Jordan to assemble, and Samuel to reach it. 9. **when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart**—Influenced by the words of Samuel, as well as by the accomplishment of these signs, Saul’s reluctance to undertake the onerous office was overcome.

The fulfillment of the two first signs is passed over, but the third is specially described. The spectacle of a man, thought fitter to look after his father’s cattle than to take part in the sacred exercises of the young prophets—a man without any previous instruction, or any known taste, entering with ardour into the spirit, and skillfully accompanying the melodies of the sacred band, was so extraordinary a phenomenon, that it gave rise to the proverb, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (see ch. 19. 24). The prophetic spirit had come upon him; and to Saul it was as personal and experimental an evidence of the truth of God’s word that had been spoken to him, as converts to Christianity have in themselves from the sanctifying power of the Gospel. 12. **but who is their father?**—The Sept. reads, “Who is his father?” referring to Saul, the son of Kish. 17. **Samuel called the people together at Mizpeh**—a shaft-like hill near Hebron, 500 feet in height. The national assemblies of the Israelites were held there. A day having been appointed for the election of a king, Samuel, after having charged the people with a rejection of God’s institution and a superseding of it by one of their own, proceeded to the nomination of the new monarch. As it was of the utmost importance that the appointment should be under the divine direction and control, the determination was made by the miraculous lot, tribes, families and individuals being successively passed until Saul was found. His concealment of himself must have been the result either of innate modesty, or a sudden nervous excitement under the

circumstances. When dragged into view he was seen to possess all those corporeal advantages which a rude people desiderate in their sovereigns; and the exhibition of which gained for the prince the favourable opinion of Samuel also. In the midst of the national enthusiasm, however, the prophet's deep piety and genuine patriotism took care to explain "the manner of the kingdom," *i. e.*, the royal rights and privileges, together with the limitations to which they were to be subjected; and, in order that the constitution might be ratified with all due solemnity, the charter of this constitutional monarchy was recorded and laid up "before the Lord," *i. e.*, deposited in the custody of the priests, along with the most sacred archives of the nation. 26. **Saul went home to Gibeah**—near Jeba; this was his place of residence (see Judges, 20), about five miles north of Jerusalem. **There went a band of men whose hearts God had touched**—Who feared God, and regarded allegiance to their king as a conscientious duty. They are opposed to "the children of Belial." 27. **The children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents**—In Eastern countries the honour of the sovereign, and the splendour of the royal household are upheld, not by a fixed rate of taxation, but by presents brought at certain seasons by officials, and men of wealth, from all parts of the kingdom, according to the means of the individual, and of a customary registered value. Such was the tribute which Saul's opponents withheld, and for want of which he was unable to set up a kingly establishment for a while. But, "biding his time," he bore the insult with a prudence and magnanimity which was of great use in the beginning of his government.

## CHAPTER XI.

1-4. **NAHASH OFFERS THEM OF JABESH-GILEAD A REPROACHFUL CONDITION.** 1. **Then Nahash the Ammonite came up**—Nahash (serpent), see Judges, 8. 3. The Ammonites had long claimed the right of original possession in Gilead. Though repressed by Jephthah (Judges, II. 33), they now, after ninety years, renew their pretensions; and it was the report of their threatened invasion that hastened the appointment of a king (ch. 12. 12). **Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee**—They saw no prospect of aid from the western Israelites, who were not only remote, but scarcely able to repel the incursions of the Philistines from themselves. 2. **thrust out all your right eyes**—*lit.*, scoop or hollow out the ball. This barbarous mutilation is the usual punishment of usurpers in the East—inflicted on chiefs; sometimes, also, even in modern history, on the whole male population of a town. Nahash meant to keep the Jabeshites useful as tributaries, whence he did not wish to render them wholly blind, but only to deprive them of their right eye, which would disqualify them for war. Besides, his object was, through the people of Jabesh-gilead, to insult the Israelitish nation, 3, 4. **send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel**—A curious proof of the general dissatisfaction

that prevailed as to the appointment of Saul. Those Gileadites deemed him capable neither of advising nor succouring them; and even in his own town the appeal was made to the people — not to the prince.

**5-11. THEY SEND TO SAUL, AND ARE DELIVERED.** 6. **he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces** (see Judges, 19). This particular form of war-summons was suited to the character and habits of an agricultural and pastoral people. Solemn in itself, the denunciation that accompanied it carried a terrible threat to those that neglected to obey it. Saul conjoins the name of Samuel with his own to lend the greater influence to the measure, and strike greater terror unto all contemners of the order. The small contingent furnished by Judah suggests that the disaffection to Saul was strongest in that tribe. 8. **Bezek** — This place of general muster was not far from Shechem, on the road to Beth-shan, and nearly opposite the ford for crossing to Jabesh-gilead. The great number on the muster-roll showed the effect of Saul's wisdom and promptitude. 11. **on the morrow Saul put the people in three companies** — Crossing the Jordan in the evening, Saul marched his army all night and came by day-break on the camp of the Ammonites, who were surprised in three different parts, and totally routed. This happened before the seven days' truce expired.

**12-15. SAUL CONFIRMED KING.** 12, 13. **the people said, Who said, shall Saul reign over us?** — The enthusiastic admiration of the people, under the impulse of grateful and generous feelings, would have dealt summary vengeance on the minority who opposed Saul, had not he, either from principle or policy, shown himself as great in clemency as in valour. The calm and sagacious counsel of Samuel directed the popular feelings into a right channel, by appointing a general assembly of the militia, the really effective force of the nation, at Gilgal, where, amid great pomp and religious solemnities, the victorious leader was confirmed in his kingdom.

## CHAPTER XII.

**1-5. SAMUEL TESTIFIES HIS INTEGRITY.** 1. **Samuel said unto all Israel** — This public address was made after the solemn re-installment of Saul, and before the convention at Gilgal separated. Samuel having challenged a review of his public life, received a unanimous testimony to the unsullied honour of his personal character, as well as the justice and integrity of his public administration. 5. **the Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness against you** — that, by their own acknowledgment, he had given them no cause to weary of the divine government by judges, and that, therefore, the blame of desiring a change of government rested with themselves. This was only insinuated, and they did not fully perceive his drift.

**6-16. HE REPROVES THE PEOPLE FOR INGRATITUDE.** 7. **Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you** — The burden

of this faithful and uncompromising address was to show them, that though they had obtained the change of government they had so importunately desired, their conduct was highly displeasing to their heavenly King; nevertheless, if they remained faithful to him and to the principles of the theocracy, they might be delivered from many of the evils to which the new state of things would expose them. And in confirmation of those statements, no less than in evidence of the divine displeasure, a remarkable phenomenon, on the invocation of the prophet, and of which he gave due premonition, took place. 11. **Bedan**—The Sept. reads Barak; and for "Samuel," some versions read "Samson," which seems more natural than that the prophet should mention himself to the total omission of the greatest of the judges. (Cf. Hebrews, 11. 32.)

17-25. HE TERRIFIES THEM WITH THUNDER IN HARVEST-TIME. 17. **Is it not wheat harvest to-day?**—That season in Palestine occurs at the end of June or beginning of July, when it seldom or never rains, and the sky is serene and cloudless. There could not, therefore, have been a stronger or more appropriate proof of a divine mission than the phenomenon of rain and thunder happening, without any prognostics of its approach, upon the prediction of a person professing himself to be a prophet of the Lord, and giving it as an attestation of his words being true. The people regarded it as a miraculous display of divine power, and, panic-struck, implore the prophet to pray for them. Promising to do so, he dispelled their fears. The conduct of Samuel, in this whole affair of the king's appointment, shows him to have been a great and good man who sank all private and personal considerations in disinterested zeal for his country's good; and whose last words in public were to warn the people, and their king, of the danger of apostacy and disobedience to God.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1, 2. SAUL'S SELECTED BAND. 1. **Saul reigned one year**—See *Marg.* The transactions recorded in the eleventh and twelfth chapters were the principal incidents comprised in the first year of Saul's reign; and the events about to be described in this happened in the second year. 2. **Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel**—This band of picked men was a body-guard, who were kept constantly on duty, while the rest of the people were dismissed till their services might be needed. It seems to have been his tactics to attack the Philistine garrisons in the country by different detachments, rather than by risking a general engagement; and his first operations were directed to rid his native territory of Benjamin of these enemies.

3, 4. HE CALLS THE HEBREWS TO GILGAL AGAINST THE PHILISTINES. 3. **Jonathan (God-given) smote the garrison of the Philistines in Geba**—Geba and Gibeah were towns in Benjamin, very close to each other (Joshua, 18. 24, 28). The word rendered "garrison" is different from that (*v.* 23; ch. 14. 1), and signifies, *lit.*, something erected; probably a pillar or flag-staff, indicative of

Philistine ascendancy, and that the secret demolition of this standard, so obnoxious to a young and noble-hearted patriot, was the feat of Jonathan referred to, is evident from the words, "the Philistines heard of it," which is not the way we should expect an attack on a fortress to be noticed. **Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land**—This, a well-known sound, was the usual Hebrew war summons; the first blast was answered by the beacon fire in the neighbouring places. A second blast was blown—then answered by a fire in a more distant locality, whence the proclamation was speedily diffused over the whole country. As the Philistines resented what Jonathan had done as an overt attempt to throw off their yoke, a levy, *en masse*, of the people was immediately ordered, the rendezvous to be the old camping ground at Gilgal.

**5. THE PHILISTINES' GREAT HOST.** 5. **The Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen**—Either this number must include chariots of every kind—or the word "chariots" must mean the men fighting in them (2 Samuel, 10. 18; 1 Kings, 20. 21; 1 Chronicles, 19, 18); or, as some eminent critics maintain, *Sheloshim*, *thirty*, has crept into the text, instead of *Shelosh*, *three*. The gathering of the chariots and horsemen must be understood to be on the Philistine plain, before they ascended the western passes, and pitched in the heart of the Benjamin hills, in "Michmash" (now Mukmas), a "steep precipitous valley" [ROBINSON] eastward from Bethaven (Bethel).

**6, 8. THE ISRAELITES' DISTRESS.** 6. **when the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait**—Though Saul's gallantry was unabated, his subjects displayed no degree of zeal and energy. Instead of venturing an encounter, they fled in all directions. Some, in their panic, left the country (*v.* 7), but most took refuge in the hiding-places which the broken ridges of the neighbourhood abundantly afford. The rocks are perforated in every direction with "caves," and "holes," and "pits"—crevices and fissures sunk deep in the rocky soil, subterranean granaries or dry wells in the adjoining fields. The name of Michmash (hidden treasure) seems to be derived from this natural peculiarity. [STANLEY.] 8. **Saul tarried seven days**—He was still in the eastern borders of his kingdom, in the valley of Jordan. Some bolder spirits had ventured to join the camp at Gilgal; but even the courage of those stout-hearted men gave way in prospect of this terrible visitation; and as many of them were stealing away, he thought some immediate and decided step must be taken.

**9-16. SAUL, WEARY OF STAYING FOR SAMUEL, SACRIFICES.** 9. **Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings**—Saul, though patriotic enough in his own way, was more ambitious of gaining the glory of a triumph to himself than ascribing it to God. He did not understand his proper position as king of Israel, and, although aware of the restrictions under which he held the sovereignty, wished to rule as an autocrat, who possessed absolute power, both in civil and sacred things. This occasion was his first trial. Samuel waited till the last day of

the seven, in order to put the constitutional character of the king to the test; and, as Saul, in his impatient and passionate haste, knowingly transgressed (*v.* 12), by invading the priest's office, and thus showing his unfitness for his high office; as he showed nothing of the faith of Gideon and other Hebrew generals, he incurred a threat of the rejection which his subsequent waywardness confirmed. 15, 16. **Samuel gat him unto Gibeah...and Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah**—Saul removed his camp thither, either in the hope that, it being his native town, he would gain an increase of followers, or that he might enjoy the counsels and influence of the prophet. 17. **the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies**—Ravaging through the three valleys which radiate from the uplands of Michmash to Ophrah on the north, through the pass of Bethhoron on the west, and down the ravines of Zeboim (the hyeans) toward the Ghor or Jordan valley on the east. 19. **now there was no smith throughout Israel**—The country was in the lowest state of depression and degradation. The Philistines, after the great victory over the sons of Eli, had become the virtual masters of the land. Their policy in disarming the natives has been often followed in the East. For repairing any serious damage to their agricultural implements, they had to apply to the neighbouring forts. "Yet they had a file," as a kind of privilege, for the purpose of sharpening sundry smaller utensils of husbandry.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1-14. JONATHAN MIRACULOUSLY SMITES THE PHILISTINES' GARRISON. 1. **the Philistines' garrison**—*Marg.*, the standing camp "in the passage of Michmash" (ch. 13. 16, 23), now Wady Es-Suweinit. "It begins in the neighbourhood of Betin (Bethel) and El-Bireh (Beeroth), and as it breaks through the ridge below these places, its sides form precipitous walls. On the right, about a quarter of an acre below, it again breaks off, and passes between high perpendicular precipices. [ROBINSON.] 2. **Saul tarried in the uttermost parts of Gibeah**—*Heb.*, Geba. Entrenched, along with Samuel and Ahiah the high-priest, on the top of one of the conical or spherical hills which abound in the Benjamite territory, and favourable for an encampment, called Migron (a precipice). 4. **Between the passages**—*i. e.*, The deep and great ravine of Suweinit. **Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison**—A distance of about three miles, running between two jagged points, or *Heb.*, "teeth of the cliff." **there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side . . . "Bozez"**—(Shining), from the aspect of the chalky rock. **'Seneh'**—(The thorn), probably from a solitary acacia on its top. They are the only rocks of the kind in this vicinity; and the top of the crag toward Michmash was occupied as the post of the Philistines. The two camps were in sight of each other, and it was up the steep rocky sides of this isolated eminence that Jonathan and his

armour-bearer (*v.* 6) made their adventurous approach. This enterprise is one of the most gallant that history or romance record. The action, viewed in itself, was rash and contrary to all established rules of military discipline, which do not permit soldiers to fight or to undertake any enterprise that may involve important consequences without the order of the generals. 6. **It may be that the Lord will work for us** — This expression did not imply a doubt; it signified simply that the object he aimed at was not in his own power — but it depended upon God — and that he expected success neither from his own strength nor his own merit. 9, 10. **if they say, Come up unto us; then we will go up; for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand** — When Jonathan appears here to prescribe a sign or token of God's will, we may infer that the same spirit which inspired this enterprise suggested the means of its execution, and put into his heart what to ask of God (see Genesis, 24. 12-14). 11. **Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of their holes** — As it could not occur to the sentries that two men had come with hostile designs, it was a natural conclusion that they were Israelite deserters. And hence no attempt was made to hinder their ascent, or stone them. 14. **that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within, as it were, an half-acre of land which a yoke of oxen might plow** — This was a very ancient mode of measurement, and it still subsists in the East. The men who saw them scrambling up the rock had been surprised and killed, and the spectacle of twenty corpses would suggest to others that they were attacked by a numerous force. The success of the adventure was aided by a panic that struck the enemy, produced both by the sudden surprise, and the shock of an earthquake. The feat was begun and achieved by the faith of Jonathan, and the issue was of God. 16. **the watchmen of Saul looked** — The wild disorder in the enemies' camp was descried, and the noise of dismay heard on the heights of Gibeah. 17-19. **Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Now number, and see who is gone from us** — The idea occurred to him that it might be some daring adventurer belonging to his own little troop, and it would be easy to discover him. **Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God** — There is no evidence that the ark had been brought from Kirjath-jearim. The Sept. version is preferable; which, by a slight variation of the text, reads, "the ephod," *i. e.*, the priestly cape, which the High Priest put on when consulting the oracle. That this should be at hand is natural, from the presence of Ahiah himself, as well as the nearness of Nob, where the Tabernacle was then situated. **Withdraw thine hand** — The priest, invested with the ephod, prayed with raised and extended hands. Saul, perceiving that the opportunity was inviting, and that God appeared to have sufficiently declared in favour of His people, requested the priest to cease, that they might immediately join in the contest. The season for consultation was past — the time for prompt action was come. 20-22. **Saul and all the people** — The whole warriors in the garrison at Gibeah, the Israelite deserters in the camp of the Philistines, and the fugitives among the mountains of Ephraim,



now all rushed to the pursuit, which was hot and sanguinary. 23. **So the Lord saved Israel that day; and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven**—*i. e.*, Bethel. It passed over the forest, now destroyed, on the central ridge of Palestine, then over to the other side from the eastern pass of Michmash (*v.* 31) to the western pass of Aijalon, through which they escaped into their own plains. 24. **Saul had adjured the people**—Afraid lest so precious an opportunity of effectually humbling the Philistine power might be lost, the impetuous king laid an anathema on any one who should taste food until the evening. This rash and foolish denunciation distressed the people, by preventing them taking such refreshments as they might get on the march, and materially hindered the successful attainment of his own patriotic object. 25. **all they of the land came to a wood, and there was honey**—The honey is described as “upon the ground,” “dropping” from the trees, and in honey-combs—indicating it to be bees’ honey.” “Bees in the East are not, as in England, kept in hives; they are all in a wild state. The forests literally flow with honey; large combs may be seen hanging on the trees as you pass along, full of honey.” [ROBERTS.] 31-34. **the people were faint, and flew upon the spoil**—At evening, when the time fixed by Saul had expired. Faint and famishing, the pursuers fell voraciously upon the cattle they had taken, and threw them on the ground to cut off their flesh and eat them raw, so that the army, by Saul’s rashness, were defiled by eating blood, or living animals; probably, as the Abyssinians do, who cut a part of the animal’s rump, but close the hide upon it, and nothing mortal follows from that wound. They were painfully conscientious in keeping the king’s order for fear of the curse, but had no scruple in transgressing God’s command. To prevent this violation of the law, Saul ordered a large stone to be rolled, and those that slaughtered the oxen to cut their throats on that stone. By laying the animal’s head on the high stone, the blood oozed out on the ground, and sufficient evidence was afforded that the ox or sheep was dead before it was attempted to eat it. 36-46. **the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not**—When Saul became aware of Jonathan’s transgression in regard to the honey, albeit it was done in ignorance and involved no guilt, he was, like Jephthah, about to put his son to death, in conformity with his vow. But the more enlightened conscience of the army prevented the tarnishing of the glory of the day by the blood of the young hero, to whose faith and valour it was chiefly due. 47, 48. **So Saul fought against all his enemies on every side**—This signal triumph over the Philistines was followed, not only by their expulsion from the land of Israel, but by successful incursions against various hostile neighbours, whom he harrassed though he did not subdue them.

## CHAPTER XV.

**1-8. SAUL SENT TO DESTROY AMALEK. 1. Samuel said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee; now harken unto the Lord**

—Several years had been passed in successful military operations against troublesome neighbours; and, during these, Saul had been left to act in a great measure at his own discretion as an independent prince. Now a second test is proposed of his possessing the character of a theocratic monarch in Israel, and, in announcing the duty required of him, Samuel brought before him his official station as the Lord's vice-gerent, and the peculiar obligation under which he was laid to act in that capacity. He had formerly done wrong, for which a severe rebuke and threatening were administered to him (ch. 13. 13, 14). Now an opportunity was afforded him of retrieving that error by an exact obedience to the divine command.

**2, 3. Amalek**—The powerful tribe which inhabited the country immediately to the eastward of the northern Cushites. Their territory extended over the whole of the eastern portion of the desert of Sinai to Rephidim—was the earliest opponent (Deuteronomy, 25. 18; Exodus, 17. 8-16)—the hereditary and restless enemy of Israel (Numbers, 14. 45; Judges, 3. 13; 6. 3), and who had not repented (ch. 14. 48) of their bitter and sleepless hatred during the 500 years that had elapsed since their doom was pronounced. Being a people of nomadic habits, they were as plundering and dangerous as the Bedouin Arabs, particularly to the southern tribes. The national interest required, and God, as KING OF ISRAEL, decreed, that this public enemy should be removed. Their destruction was to be without reservation or exception.

**I remember**—I am reminded of what Amalek did—perhaps by the still remaining trophy or memorial erected by Moses (Exodus, 17. 15, 16). **4. Saul gathered the people together**—The alacrity with which he entered on the necessary preparations for the expedition gave a fair but delusive promise of faithfulness in its execution. **Telaim**—or "Telem," among the uttermost cities of the tribe of Judah toward the coast of Edom (Joshua, 15. 21, 24).

**5. Saul came to a city of Amalek**—probably their capital. **laid wait in the valley**—following the strategic policy of Joshua at Ai (Joshua, 6). **6. Kenites**—(see Judges, 1. 16). In consequence, probably, of the unsettled state of Judah, they seem to have returned to their old desert tracts. Though now intermingled with the Amalekites, they were not implicated in the offenses of that wicked race; but for the sake of their ancestors, between whom and those of Israel there had been a league of amity, a timely warning was afforded them to remove from the scene of danger.

**7-9. HE SPARES AGAG, AND THE BEST OF THE SPOIL. 7-9. Saul smote the Amalekites**—His own view of the proper and expedient course to follow was his rule, not the command of God.

**8. he took Agag alive**—This was the common title of the Amalekite kings. He had no scruple about the apparent cruelty of it, for he made fierce and indiscriminate havoc of the people. But he spared Agag, probably to enjoy the glory of displaying so distin-

guished a captive, and, in like manner, the most valuable portions of the booty, as the cattle. By this willful and partial obedience to a positive command, complying with it in some parts, and violating it in others, as suited his own taste and humour, Saul showed his selfish, arbitrary temper, and his love of despotic power, and his utter unfitness to perform the duties of a delegated king in Israel.

10, 11. **GOD REJECTS HIM FOR DISOBEDIENCE.** 10, 11. **The word of the Lord came unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul**—Repentance is attributed in Scripture to Him when bad men give Him cause to alter His course and method of procedure, and to treat them as if He did “repent” of kindness shown. To the heart of a man like Samuel, who was above all envious considerations, and really attached to the king, so painful an announcement moved all his pity, and led him to pass a sleepless night of earnest intercession. 12. **Saul came to Carmel**—In the south of Judah (Joshua, 15. 55; ch. 25. 2). 12. **he set him up a place**—*i. e.*, a pillar (2 Samuel, 18. 18); *lit.*, a *hand*—indicating that whatever was the form of the monument, it was surmounted, according to the ancient fashion, by the figure of a hand, the symbol of power and energy. The erection of this vain-glorious trophy was an additional act of disobedience. His pride had overborne his sense of duty in first raising this monument to his own honour, and then going to Gilgal to offer sacrifice to God. 13. **Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord**—Saul was either blinded by a partial and delusive self-love, or he was, in his declaration to Samuel, acting the part of a bold and artful hypocrite. He professed to have fulfilled the divine command, and that the blame of any defects in the execution lay with the people. Samuel saw the real state of the case, and, in discharge of the commission he had received before setting out, proceeded to denounce his conduct as characterized by pride, rebellion, and obstinate disobedience. When Saul persisted in declaring that he had obeyed, alleging that the animals, whose bleating was heard, had been reserved for a liberal sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, his shuffling, prevaricating answer, called forth a stern rebuke from the prophet. It well deserved it—for the destination of the spoil to the altar was a flimsy pretext—a gross deception, an attempt to conceal the selfishness of the original motive under the cloak of religious zeal and gratitude. 24. **I feared the people, and obeyed their voice**—This was a different reason from the former he had assigned; it was the language of a man driven to extremities, and even had it been true, the principles expounded by Samuel showed that it could have been no extenuation of the offense. The prophet then pronounced the irreversible sentence of the rejection of Saul and his family. He was judicially cut off for his disobedience. 24, 25. **I have sinned . . . turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord**—The erring, but proud and obstinate monarch was now humbled. He was conscience-smitten for the moment, but his confession proceeded not from sincere repentance, but from a sense of danger and desire of averting the sentence denounced

against him. For the sake of public appearance, he besought Samuel not to allow their serious differences to transpire, but to join with him in a public act of worship. Under the influence of his painfully agitated feelings, he designed to offer sacrifice, partly to express his gratitude for the recent victory, and partly to implore mercy and a reversal of his doom. It was, in another view, a politic scheme, that Samuel might be betrayed into a countenancing of his design in reserving the cattle for sacrificing. Samuel declined to accompany him. 27. **he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle**—The *moil*, upper tunic, official robe. In an agony of mental excitement, he took hold of the prophet's dress to detain him, the rending of the mantle was adroitly pointed to as a significant and mystical representation of his severance from the throne. 29. **the strength of Israel will not lie**—*Heb.*, "He that gives a victory to Israel;" a further rebuke of his pride in rearing the Carmel trophy, and an intimation that no loss would be sustained in Israel by his rejection. 31. **Samuel turned again after Saul**—Not to worship along with him; but first, that the people might have no ground, on pretense of Saul's rejection, to withdraw their allegiance from him; and secondly, to compensate for Saul's error, by executing God's judgment upon Agag. 32. **Agag came unto him delicately**—Or, cheerfully, since he had gained the favour and protection of the king. 33. **Samuel hewed Agag**—This cruel tyrant met the retribution of a righteous providence. Never has it been unusual for great or official personages in the East to perform executions with their own hands. Samuel did it "before the Lord" in Gilgal, appointing that same mode of punishment (hitherto unknown in Israel) to be used toward him, which he had formerly used toward others.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**1-10. SAMUEL SENT BY GOD TO BETHLEHEM.** 1. **The Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul**—Samuel's grief on account of Saul's rejection, accompanied, doubtless, by earnest prayers for his restitution, showed the amiable feelings of the man; but they were at variance with his public duty as a prophet. The declared purpose of God to transfer the kingdom of Israel into other hands than Saul's, was not an angry menace, but a fixed and immutable decree; so that Samuel ought to have sooner submitted to the peremptory manifestation of the divine will; but to leave him no longer room to doubt of its being unalterable, he was sent on a private mission to anoint a successor to Saul (see ch. 10. 1). The immediate designation of a king was of the greatest importance for the interests of the nation in the event of Saul's death, which, to this time, was dreaded: it would establish David's title, and comfort the minds of Samuel and other good men with a right settlement, whatever contingency might happen. **I have provided me a king**—The language is remarkable, and intimates a difference between this and the former king. Saul was the people's choice—the fruit of their wayward and sinful

desires for their own honour and aggrandizement; the next was to be a king who would consult the divine glory, and selected from that tribe to which the pre-eminence had been early promised (Genesis, 49. 10). 2. **How can I go?**—This is another instance of human infirmity in Samuel. Since God had sent him on this mission, He would protect him in the execution. **I am come to sacrifice**—It seems to have been customary with Samuel to do this in the different circuits to which he went, that he might encourage the worship of God. 3. **call Jesse to the sacrifice**—*i. e.*, the social feast that followed the peace-offering. Samuel, being the offerer, had a right to invite any guest he pleased. 4. **the elders of the town trembled at his coming**—Bethlehem was an obscure town, and not within the usual circuit of the judge. The elders were naturally apprehensive, therefore, that his arrival was occasioned by some extraordinary reason, and that it might entail evil upon their town, in consequence of the estrangement between Samuel and the king. 5. **sanctify yourselves**—By the preparations described (Exodus, 19. 14, 15). The elders were to sanctify themselves. Samuel himself took the greatest care in the sanctification of Jesse's family. Some, however, think that the former were invited only to join in the sacrifice, while the family of Jesse were invited by themselves to the subsequent feast. 6-10. **Samuel said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him**—Here Samuel, in consequence of taking his impressions from the external appearance, falls into the same error as formerly (ch. 10. 24).

11-14. **HE ANOINTS DAVID.** 11. **there remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep**—Jesse having evidently no idea of David's wisdom and bravery, spoke of him as the most unfit. God, in his providence, so ordered it, that the appointment of David might the more clearly appear to be a divine purpose, and not the design either of Samuel or Jesse. David having not been sanctified with the rest of his family, it is probable that he returned to his pastoral duties the moment the special business on which he had been summoned was done. 12. **He was ruddy, &c.**—Josephus says that David was ten, while most modern commentators are of opinion that he must have been fifteen years of age. 13. **Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him.** This transaction must have been strictly private. 14-18. **The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him**—His own gloomy reflections, the consciousness that he had not acted up to the character of an Israelitish king, the loss of his throne, and the extinction of his royal house, made him jealous, irritable, vindictive, and subject to fits of morbid melancholy. 19. **Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David**—In the East the command of a king is imperative, and Jesse, however reluctant and alarmed, had no alternative but to comply. 20. **Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them . . . unto Saul**—as a token of homage and respect. 21. **David came to Saul**—Providence thus prepared David for his destiny, by placing him in a way to become acquainted with the manners of the court, the

business of government, and the general state of the kingdom. **became his armour-bearer**—This choice, as being an expression of the king's partiality, shows how honourable the office was held to be. 23. **David took an harp and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and well**—The ancients believed that music had a mysterious influence in healing mental disorders.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1-3. THE ISRAELITES AND PHILISTINES BEING READY TO BATTLE. 1. **the Philistines gathered together their armies**—Twenty-seven years after their overthrow at Michmash. Having now recovered their spirits and strength, they sought an opportunity of wiping out the infamy of that national disaster, as well as to regain their lost ascendancy over Israel. **Shocoh**—now Shuweikeh, a town in the western plains of Judah (Joshua, 15. 35), nine Roman miles from Eleutheropolis, toward Jerusalem. [ROBINSON.] **Azekah**—a small place in the neighbourhood. **Ephesdammim**—or Pas-dammim (I Chronicles, 11. 13), "the portion or effusion of blood," situated between the other two. 2. **valley of Elah**—*i. e.*, the Terebinth, now wady Er-sumt. [ROBINSON.] Another valley, somewhat to the north, now called Wady Beit Hanina, has been fixed on by the tradition of ages.

4-II. GOLIATH CHALLENGES A COMBAT. 4-II. **a champion**—*Heb.*, a man between two; *i. e.*, a person who, on the part of his own people, undertook to determine the national quarrel by engaging in single combat with a chosen warrior in the hostile army. 5. **helmet of brass**—The Philistine helmet had the appearance of a row of feathers set in a tiara, or metal band, to which were attached scales of the same material for the defense of the neck and the sides of the face. [OSBURN.] **a coat of mail**—a kind of corslet quilted with leather or plates of metal, reaching only to the chest, and supported by shoulder straps, leaving the shoulders and arms at full liberty. 6. **greaves of brass**—boots, terminating at the ankle, made in one plate of metal, but round to the shape of the leg, and often lined with felt or sponge. They were useful in guarding the legs, not only against the spikes of the enemy, but in making way among thorns and briars. **a target of brass**—a circular frame, carried at the back, suspended by a long belt which crossed the breast from the shoulders to the loins. 7. **staff of his spear**—rather under five feet long, and capable of being used as a javelin (ch. 19. 10). It had an iron head. **one bearing a shield**—In consequence of their great size and weight, the oriental warrior had a trusty and skillful friend, whose office it was to bear the large shield, behind which he avoided the missile weapons of the enemy. He was covered, cap-a-pie, with defensive armour, while he had only two offensive weapons—a sword by his side and a spear in his hand. 8-II. **I defy the armies of Israel; give me a man, that we may fight together**—In cases of single combat, a warrior used to go out in front of his party, and advancing toward the opposite ranks, challenge some one to fight

with him. If his formidable appearance, or great reputation for physical strength and heroism, deterred any from accepting the challenge, he used to parade himself within hearing of the enemy's lines, specify in a loud, boastful, bravado style, defying them, and pouring out torrents of abuse and insolence to provoke their resentment.

**12-58. DAVID ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE, AND SLAYS HIM.**  
**17. Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves**—In those times campaigns seldom lasted above a few days at a time. The soldiers were volunteers or militia, who were supplied with provisions from time to time by their friends at home. **18. take their pledge**—Tokens of the soldiers' health and safety were sent home in the convenient form of a lock of hair, or piece of their nail, or such like. **carry these ten cheeses to the captain**—to enlist his kind attention. Oriental cheeses are very small, resembling in shape and size our penny loaves; and, although they are frequently made of so soft a consistence as to resemble curds, those which David carried seem to have been fully formed, pressed, and sufficiently dried to admit of their being carried. **20. David left the sheep with a keeper**—This is the only instance in which the hired shepherd is distinguished from the master or one of his family. **trench**—some feeble attempt at a rampart. It appears (see *Marg.*) to have been formed by a line of carts or chariots, which, from the earliest times, was the practice of nomad people. **22. left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage**—to make his way to the standard of Judah. **25. make his father's house free in Israel**—His family should be exempted from the impositions and services to which the general body of the Israelites were subjected. **34-36. a lion and a bear**—These were two different rencontres, for those animals prowl alone. The bear must have been a Syrian bear, which is believed to be a distinct species, or perhaps a variety of the brown bear. The beard applies to the lion alone. Those feats seem to have been performed with no weapons more effective than the rude staves and stones of the field, or his shepherd's crook. **36. The Lord that delivered me**—It would have been natural for a youth, and especially an Oriental youth, to make a parade of his gallantry. But David's piety sank all consideration of his own prowess, and ascribed the success of those achievements to the Divine aid, which he felt assured would not be withheld from him in a cause which so intimately concerned the safety and honour of His people. **Saul said, Go, and the Lord be with thee**—The pious language of the modest but valiant youth impressed the monarch's heart. He felt that it indicated the true military confidence for Israel, and, therefore, made up his mind, without any demur, to sanction a combat on which the fate of his kingdom depended, and with a champion supporting his interests apparently so unequal to the task. **38, 39. Saul armed David with his armour**—The ancient Hebrews were particularly attentive to the personal safety of their warriors, and hence Saul equipped the youthful champion with his own defensive accoutrements, which would be of the best style. It is probable that Saul's

coat of mail, or corslet was a loose shirt, otherwise it could not have fitted both a stripling and a man of the colossal stature of the king. 40. **brook**—Wady. **bag**—Or script for containing his daily food. **sling**—The sling consisted of a double rope with a thong, probably of leather, to receive the stone. The slinger held a second stone in his left hand. David chose five stones, as a reserve, in case the first should fail. Shepherds in the East carry a sling and stones still, for the purpose both of driving away, or killing, the enemies that prowl about the flock. 42-47. **the Philistine said...David said to the Philistine**—When the two champions met, they generally made each of them a speech, and sometimes recited some verses, filled with allusions and epithets of the most opprobrious kind, and hurling contempt and defiance at one another. This kind of abusive dialogue is common among the Arab combatants still. David's speech, however, presents a striking contrast to the usual strain of those invectives. It was full of pious trust, and to God he ascribed all the glory of the triumph he anticipated. 49. **he smote the Philistine in the forehead**—At the opening for the eyes—that was the only exposed part of his body. 51. **cut off his head**—Not as an evidence of the giant's death, for his slaughter had been effected in presence of the whole army, but as a trophy to be borne to Saul, The heads of slain enemies are always regarded in the East as the most welcome tokens of victory. 52. **Shaaraim**—See Joshua, 15, 36. 54. **tent**—The sacred tabernacle. David dedicated the sword of Goliath as a votive offering to the Lord. 55-58. **Saul said unto Abner...whose son is this youth?**—A young man is more spoken of in many Eastern countries by his father's name than his own. The growth of the beard, and other changes on a now full-grown youth, prevented the king from recognizing his former favourite minstrel.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1-4. JONATHAN LOVES DAVID. 1. **the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David**—They were nearly of an age. The prince had taken little interest in David as a minstrel; but his heroism and modest, manly bearing, his piety and high endowments, kindled the flame, not of admiration only, but of affection, in the congenial mind of Jonathan. 2. **Saul would let him go no more home**—He was established as a permanent resident at court. 3. **Then Jonathan and David made a covenant**—Such covenants of brotherhood are frequent in the East. They are ratified by certain ceremonies, and in presence of witnesses, that the persons covenanting will be sworn brothers for life. 4. **Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David**—To receive any part of the dress which had been worn by a sovereign or his eldest son and heir, is deemed, in the East, the *highest* honour which can be conferred on a subject (see Esther, 6. 8). The girdle, being connected with the sword and the bow, may be considered as being part of the military dress and great value is attached to it in the East.



**5-9. SAUL ENVIES HIS PRAISE. 6. The women came out of all the cities of Israel**—In the homeward march from the pursuit of the Philistines. This is a characteristic trait of Oriental manners. On the return of friends long absent, and particularly on the return of a victorious army, bands of women and children issue from the towns and villages to form a triumphal procession, to celebrate the victory, and, as they go along, gratify the soldiers with dancing, instrumental music, and extempore songs, in honour of the generals who have earned the highest distinction by feats of gallantry. The Hebrew women, therefore, were merely paying the customary gratulations to David as the deliverer of their country, but they committed a great indiscretion by praising a subject at the expense of their sovereign. **9. Saul eyed David**—*i. e.*, invidiously, with secret and malignant hatred.

**10-12. SEEKS TO KILL HIM. 10. On the morrow the evil spirit from God came upon Saul**—This rankling thought brought on a sudden paroxysm of his mental malady. **he prophesied**—The term denotes one under the influence either of a good or a bad spirit. In the present it is used to express that Saul was in a frenzy. David, perceiving the symptoms, hastened, by the soothing strains of his harp, to allay the stormy agitation of the royal mind. But, ere its mollifying influence could be felt, Saul hurled a javelin at the head of the young musician. **There was a javelin in Saul's hand**-- Had it been followed by a fatal result, the deed would have been considered the act of an irresponsible maniac. It was repeated more than once ineffectually, and Saul became impressed with a dread of David as under the special protection of Providence.

**13-16. FEARS HIM FOR HIS GOOD SUCCESS. 13. Therefore Saul removed him from him**—Sent him away from the court, where the principal persons, including his own son, were spell-bound with admiration of the young and pious warrior. **and made him captain over a thousand**—Gave him a military commission, which was intended to be an honourable exile. But this post of duty served only to draw out before the public the extraordinary and varied qualities of his character, and to give him a stronger hold of the people's affections.

**17-21. HE OFFERS HIM HIS DAUGHTER FOR A SNARE. 17. Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife**—Though bound to this already, he had found it convenient to forget his former promise, and now holds it out as a new offer, which would tempt David to give additional proofs of his valour. But the fickle and perfidious monarch broke his pledge at the time when the marriage was on the eve of being celebrated, and bestowed Merab on another man (see 2 Samuel, 21. 8); an indignity as well as a wrong, which was calculated deeply to wound the feelings, and provoke the resentment of David. Perhaps it was intended to do so, that advantage might be taken of his indiscretion. But David was preserved from this snare. **20. Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David**—This must have happened some time after. **they told Saul, and the thing pleased him**—Not from any favour to David, but he saw that it would be

turned to the advancement of his malicious purposes, and the more so when, by the artful intrigues and flattery of his spies, the loyal sentiments of David were discovered. 25. **The king desireth not any dowry** — In Eastern countries the husband *purchases* his wife either by gifts or services. As neither David nor his family were in circumstances to give a suitable dowry for a princess, the king intimated that he would be graciously pleased to accept some gallant deed in the public service. **a hundred foreskins of the Philistines** — Such mutilations on the bodies of their slain enemies were commonly practiced in ancient war, and the number told indicated the glory of the victory. Saul's willingness to accept a public service had an air of liberality, while his choice of so difficult and hazardous a service seemed only putting a proper value on gaining the hand of a king's daughter. But he covered unprincipled malice against David under this proposal, which exhibited a zeal for God and the covenant of circumcision. 26. **the days were not expired** — The period within which this exploit was to be achieved was not exhausted. 27. **David slew of the Philistines two hundred men** — The number was doubled, partly to show his respect and attachment to the princess, and partly to oblige Saul to the fulfillment of his pledge. 29. **Saul was yet the more afraid of David** — Because Providence had visibly favoured him, by not only defeating the conspiracy against his life, but through his royal alliance paving his way to the throne.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1-7. JONATHAN DISCLOSES HIS FATHER'S PURPOSE TO KILL DAVID. 1. **Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David** — The murderous design he had secretly cherished he now reveals to a few of his intimate friends. Jonathan was among the number. He prudently said nothing at the time, but secretly apprized David of his danger; and waiting till the morning, when his father's excited temper would be cooled, stationed his friend in a place of concealment, where, overhearing the conversation, he might learn how matters really stood, and take immediate flight, if necessary. 4-7. **Jonathan spake good of David** — He told his father he was committing a great sin to plot against the life of a man who had rendered the most invaluable services to his country; and whose loyalty had been uniformly steady and devoted. The strong remonstrances of Jonathan produced an effect on the impulsive mind of his father. As he was still susceptible of good and honest impressions, he bound himself by an oath to relinquish his hostile purpose, and thus, through the intervention of the noble-minded prince, a temporary reconciliation was effected, in consequence of which David was again employed in the public service.

8-17. SAUL'S MALICIOUS RAGE BREAKS OUT AGAINST DAVID. 8-10. **David went out and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter** — A brilliant victory was gained over the public enemy. But these fresh laurels of David re-awakened

in the moody breast of Saul the former spirit of envy and melancholy. On David's return to court, the temper of Saul became more fiendish than ever—the melodious strains of the harp had lost all their power to charm; and, in a paroxysm of uncontrollable phrenzy, he aimed a javelin at the person of David—the missile having been thrown with such force that it pierced the chamber wall. David providentially escaped; but the king, having now thrown off the mask, and being bent on aggressive measures, made his son-in-law's situation everywhere perilous. 11, 12.

**Saul sent messengers unto David's house to watch him and to slay him**—The fear of causing a commotion in the town, or favouring his escape in the darkness, seemed to have influenced the king in ordering them to patrol till the morning. This infatuation was overruled by Providence to favour David's escape; for his wife, secretly apprized by Jonathan, who was privy to the design, or spying persons in court livery watching the gate, let him down through a window (see Joshua, 2. 15). 13, 14. **Michal took an image and laid it in the bed**—“An image,” *lit.*, “the Tera-  
phim,” and laid, not in the bed, but literally on the “divan,” and “the pillows,” *i. e.*, the cushion, which usually lay at the back of the divan, and was stuffed with “goat's hair;” she took from its bolster or heading—at the upper part of the divan; this she placed lower down, and covered with a mantle or hyke as if to foster a proper warmth in a patient; at the same time spreading the goat's hair skin so as to resemble human hair in a disheveled state. The pretext was, that David lay there sick. The first messengers of Saul, keeping at a respectable distance, were deceived; but the imposition was detected on a closer inspection. 15. **Bring him to me in the bed**—a portable couch or mattress.

**18-23. DAVID FLEES TO SAMUEL. 18-21. David fled, and came to Ramah**—Samuel was living in great retirement, superintending the school of the prophets, established in the little hamlet of Naioth, in the neighbourhood of Ramah. It was a retreat congenial to the mind of David; but Saul, having found out his asylum, sent three successive bodies of men to apprehend him. The character of the place, and the influence of the sacred exercises produced such an effect on them, that they were incapable of discharging their commission, and were led, by a resistless impulse, to join in singing the praises of God. Saul, in a fit of rage and disappointment, determined to go himself. But, before reaching the spot, his mental susceptibilities were roused even more than his messengers, and he was found, ere long, swelling the ranks of the young prophets. This singular change can be ascribed only to the power of Him who can turn the hearts of men even as the rivers of water.

**24. SAUL PROPHECIES. 24. lay down naked**—*i. e.*, divested of his armour and outer robes—in a state of trance. Thus God, in making the wrath of man to praise Him, preserved the lives of all the prophets, frustrated all the purposes of Saul, and preserved the life of his servant.

## CHAPTER XX.

## 1-10. DAVID CONSULTS WITH JONATHAN FOR HIS SAFETY. 1.

**David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan**—He could not remain in Naioth, for he had strong reason to fear, that when the religious fit, if we may so call it, was over, Saul would relapse into his usual fell and sanguinary temper. It may be thought that David acted imprudently in directing his flight to Gibeah. But he was evidently prompted to go thither by the most generous feelings—to inform his friend of what had recently occurred, and to obtain that friend's sanction to the course he was compelled to adopt. Jonathan could not be persuaded there was any real danger after the oath his father had taken; at all events, he felt assured his father would do nothing without telling him. Filial attachment naturally blinded the prince to defects in the parental character, and made him reluctant to believe his father capable of such atrocity. David repeated his unshaken convictions of Saul's murderous purposes, but in terms delicately chosen (*v.* 3), not to wound the filial feelings of his friend; while Jonathan, clinging, it would seem, to a hope that the extraordinary scene enacted at Naioth might have wrought a sanctified improvement on Saul's temper and feelings, undertook to inform David of the result of his observations at home. 5. **David said to Jonathan, to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat**—The beginning of a new month or moon was always celebrated by special sacrifices, followed by feasting, at which the head of a family expected all its members to be present. David, both as the king's son-in-law, and a distinguished courtier, dined on such occasions at the royal table, and from its being generally known that David had returned to Gibeah, his presence in the palace would be naturally expected. This occasion was chosen by the two friends for testing the king's state of feeling. As a suitable pretext for David's absence, it was arranged that he should visit his family at Bethlehem, and thus create an opportunity of ascertaining how his non-appearance would be viewed. The time and place were fixed for Jonathan reporting to David; but, as circumstances might render another interview unsafe, it was deemed expedient to communicate by a concerted signal.

11-23. THEIR COVENANT RENEWED BY OATH. II. **Jonathan said to David, Come, let us go into the field**—The private dialogue which is here detailed at full length presents a most beautiful exhibition of these two amiable and noble-minded friends. Jonathan was led, in the circumstances, to be the chief speaker. The strength of his attachment, his pure disinterestedness, his warm piety—his invocation to God consisting of a prayer and a solemn oath combined—the calm and full expression he gave of his conviction, that his own family were, by the divine will, to be disinherited, and David elevated to the possession of the throne; the covenant entered into with David on behalf of his descendants, and the imprecation (*v.* 16) denounced on any of them who should violate his part of the conditions; the reiteration of this covenant

on both sides (v. 17) to make it indissoluble; all this indicates such a power of mutual affection, such magnetic attractiveness in the character of David; such susceptibility and elevation of feeling in the heart of Jonathan, that this interview for dramatic interest and moral beauty stands unrivaled in the records of human friendship. 19. **when thou hast stayed three days**—Either with your family at Bethlehem, or wherever you find it convenient. **come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand**—*Heb.*, “in the day or time of the business,” when the same matter was under inquiry formerly (ch. 19. 22). **remain by the stone Ezel**—*Heb.*, “the stone of the way;” a sort of mile-stone which directed travelers. He was to conceal himself in some cave or hiding-place near that spot. 23. **as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of**—The plan being concerted, the friends separated for a time, and the amiable character of Jonathan again peers out in his parting allusion to their covenant of friendship.

**24-40. SAUL, MISSING DAVID, SEEKS TO KILL JONATHAN.**  
25. **the king sat upon his seat, as at other times . . . by the wall**—The left hand corner, at the upper end of a room was, and still is, in the East, the most honourable place. The person seated there has his left arm confined by the wall, but his right hand is at full liberty. From Abner's position next the king, and David's seat being left empty, it would seem that a state etiquette was observed at the royal table, each of the courtiers and ministers having places assigned them according to their respective gradations of rank. **Jonathan arose**—Either as a mark of respect on the entrance of a son to stand in presence of his father. 26. **he is not clean**—No notice was taken of David's absence, as he might be labouring under some ceremonial defilement. 27. **on the morrow, which was the second day of the month**—The time of the moon's appearance being uncertain—whether at mid-day, in the evening, or at midnight, the festival was extended over two days. Custom, not the law, had introduced this. **Saul said unto Jonathan, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse**—The question was asked, as it were, casually, and with as great an air of indifference as he could assume. And Jonathan having replied that David had asked and obtained his permission to attend a family anniversary at Bethlehem, the pent-up passions of the king burst out in a most violent storm of rage and invective against his son. 30. **thou son of the perverse woman**—This is a striking Oriental form of abuse. Saul was not angry with his wife; it was the son alone, upon whom he meant, by this style of address, to discharge his resentment; and the principle, on which it is founded seems to be, that to a genuine filial instinct it is a more inexpiable offense to hear the name or character of a parent traduced than any personal reproach. This was, undoubtedly, one cause of “the fierce anger” in which the high-minded prince left the table without tasting a morsel. 33. **Saul cast a javelin at him**—This is a sad proof of the maniacal phrenzy into which the unhappy monarch was transported. 35. **Jonathan went into the field at the time ap-**

pointed — or, “at the place appointed.” 36. **he said to the lad, Run, find out the arrows which I shoot** — the direction given aloud to the attendant was the signal pre-concerted with David. It implied danger. 40. **Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad** — *i. e.*, his missile weapons. The French word, “artillerie,” signifies “archery,” and the term is still used in England, in the designation of the “artillery company of London,” the association of archers, though they have long disused bows and arrows. Jonathan’s boy being dispatched out of the way, the friends enjoyed the satisfaction of a final meeting.

**41, 42. JONATHAN AND DAVID LOVINGLY PART.** 41. **David fell on his face and bowed three times** — a token of homage to the prince’s rank ; but, on a close approach, every other consideration was sunk in the full flow of the purest brotherly affection. 42. **Jonathan said to David, Go in peace** — The interview being a stolen one, and every moment precious, it was kindness in Jonathan to hasten his friend’s departure.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-7. DAVID, AT NOB, OBTAINS OF AHIMELECH HALLOWED BREAD.** 1. **Then came David to Ahimelech** — **Nob**, a city of the priests (ch. 22. 19), was in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives — a little north of the top, and on the north-east of the city. It is computed to have been about five miles distant from Gibeah. Ahimelech, the same as Ahiah, or perhaps his brother, both being sons of Ahitub (Cf. ch. 14. 3, with ch. 22. 4-11, 20). His object in fleeing to this place was partly for the supply of his necessities, and partly for comfort and counsel, in the prospect of leaving the kingdom. **Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David** — suspecting some extraordinary occurrence by his appearing so suddenly, and in such a style, for his attendants were left at a little distance. 2. **The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know** — This was a direct falsehood, extorted through fear. David probably supposed, like many other persons, that a lie is quite excusable which is told for the sole purpose of saving the speaker’s life. But what is essentially sinful can never, from circumstances, change its immoral character; and David had to repent of this vice of lying (Psalm 119. 29). 4. **there is no hallowed bread** — There would be plenty of bread in his house; but there was no time to wait for it. “The hallowed bread” was the old shew bread, which had been removed the previous day, and which was reserved for the use of the priests alone (Leviticus, 24. 9). Before entertaining the idea that this bread could be lawfully given to David and his men, the High Priest seems to have consulted the oracle (ch. 22. 10) as to the course to be followed in this emergency. A dispensation to use the hallowed bread was specially granted by God himself. 5. **these three days** — as required by law (Exodus, 19. 15). David and his attendants seem to have been lurking in some of the adjoining caves, to elude pursuit, and

to have been, consequently, reduced to great extremities of hunger. **the bread is in a manner common**—*i. e.*, now that it is no longer standing on the Lord's table. It is eaten by the priests, and may also, in our circumstances, be eaten by us. **yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel**—*i. e.*, though the hallowed bread had been but newly placed on the vessel, the ritual ordinance would have to yield to the great law of necessity and mercy (see Matthew, 12. 3; Mark, 2. 25. Luke, 6. 3). 6. **there is no bread there**—in the tabernacle. The removal of the old, and the substitution of new, bread was done on the Sabbath (Leviticus, 24. 8), the loaves being kept warm in an oven heated the previous day. 7. **Doeg, an Edomite**—who had embraced the Hebrew religion. **detained before the Lord**—at the tabernacle, perhaps, in the performance of a vow, or from its being the Sabbath, which rendered it unlawful for him to prosecute his journey. **the chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul**—Eastern monarchs anciently had large possessions in flocks and herds; and the office of the chief shepherd was an important one.

9. **HE TAKES GOLIATH'S SWORD.** 9. **Sword of Goliath**—(see ch. 18. 54). **behind the ephod**—In the place allowed for keeping the sacred vestments, of which the ephod is mentioned as the chief. The giant's sword was deposited in that safe custody as a memorial of the Divine goodness in delivering Israel. **there is none like that**—Not only for its size and superior temper, but for its being a pledge of the Divine favour to him, and a constant stimulus to his faith.

10-15. **AT GATH, HE FEIGNS HIMSELF MAD.** 10. **David... fled... to Achish, king of Gath**—Which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines. In this place his person must have been known, and to venture into that country, he their greatest enemy, and with the sword of Goliath in his hand, would seem to have been a perilous experiment; but, doubtless, the protection he received implies that he had been directed by the Divine oracle. Achish was generous (ch. 27. 6). He might wish to weaken the resources of Saul, and it was common in ancient times for great men to be harboured by neighbouring princes. 13. **feigned himself mad**—It is supposed to have been an attack of epilepsy, real, or perhaps only pretended. This disease is relieved by foaming at the mouth. **let fall his spittle upon his beard**—No wonder that Achish supposed him insane, as such an indignity, whether done by another or one's self, to the beard, is considered in the East an intolerable insult.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1-8. **DAVID'S KINDRED AND OTHERS RESORT TO HIM AT ADULLAM.** 1. **David... escaped to the cave Adullam**—Supposed to be that now called Deir-Dubban, a number of pits or underground vaults, some nearly square, and all about fifteen or twenty feet deep with perpendicular sides in the soft limestone or chalky rocks. They are on the borders of the Philistine plain, at the base of the Judea mountains, six miles south-west from Bethle-

hem, and well adapted for concealing a number of refugees. **his brethren, and all his father's house . . . went down**—To escape the effects of Saul's rage, which seems to have extended to all David's family. From Bethlehem to Deir-Dubban it is, indeed, a descent all the way, 2. **every one that was in distress**—(see Judges, II. 3). 3. **David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab**—Mizpeh signifies a watchtower, and it is evident that it must be taken in this sense here, for (*v.* 4) it is called "the hold" or fort. The king of Moab was an enemy of Saul (ch. 14. 47), and the great-grandson of Ruth, of course, related to the family of Jesse. David, therefore, had less anxiety in seeking an asylum within the dominions of this prince than those of Achish, because the Moabites had no grounds for entertaining vindictive feelings against him, and their enmity to Saul rendered them the more willing to receive so illustrious a refugee from his court. 5. **the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold**—This sound advice, no doubt, came from a higher source than Gad's own sagacity. It was right to appear publicly among the people of his own tribe, as one conscious of innocence, and trusting in God; and it was expedient that, on the death of Saul, his friends might be encouraged to support his interest. **forest of Hareth**—South-west of Jerusalem. 6. **Saul abode under a tree in Ramah**—*lit.*, under a grove on a hill. Oriental princes frequently sit with their court under some shady canopy in the open air. A spear was the early scepter. 7. **Hear now, ye Benjamites**—This was an appeal to stimulate the patriotism or jealousy of his own tribe, from which he insinuated it was the design of David to transfer the kingdom to another. This address seems to have been made on hearing of David's return with his 400 men to Judah. A dark suspicion had risen in the jealous mind of the king that Jonathan was privy to this movement, which he dreaded as a conspiracy against the crown.

9-19. **DOEG ACCUSES AHIMELECH.** 9. **Doeg set over the servants**—*Sept.*, the mules of Saul. 10. **he inquired of the Lord for him**—Some suppose that this was a malicious fiction of Doeg to curry favour with the king, but Ahimelech seems to acknowledge the fact. The poor, simple-minded high priest knew nothing of the existing family feud between Saul and David. The informer, if he knew it, said nothing of the cunning artifice by which David obtained the aid of Ahimelech. *The facts looked against him*, and the whole priesthood along with him were declared abettors of conspiracy.

17-19. **SAUL COMMANDS TO KILL THE PRIESTS.** 17. **the footmen that stood about him**—His body-guard, or his runners (ch. 8. 11; 2 Samuel, 15. 1; 1 Kings, 1. 5; 1 Kings, 14. 28), who held an important place at court (2 Chronicles, 12. 10). But they chose rather to disobey the king than to offend God by imbruing their hands in the blood of his ministering servants. A foreigner alone (Psalm 52. 1-3) could be found willing to be the executioner of this bloody and sacrilegious sentence. Thus was the doom of the house of Eli fulfilled. 19. **Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword**—The barbarous atrocities perpetrated against this city seem to have been designed to terrify all the sub-



jects of Saul from affording either aid or an asylum to David. But they proved ruinous to Saul's own interest, as they alienated the priesthood, and disgusted all good men in the kingdom.

**20-23. ABIATHAR ESCAPES AND FLEES AFTER DAVID.** 20. **one of the sons of Ahimelech . . . escaped**—This was Abiathar, who repaired to David in the forest of Hareth, rescuing, with his own life, the high priest's vestments (ch. 23. 6, 9). On hearing his sad tale, David declared that he had dreaded such a fatal result from the malice and intriguing ambition of Doeg; and, accusing himself as having been the occasion of all the disaster to Abiathar's family, invited him to remain, because firmly trusting himself in the accomplishment of the Divine promise, David could guarantee protection to him.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

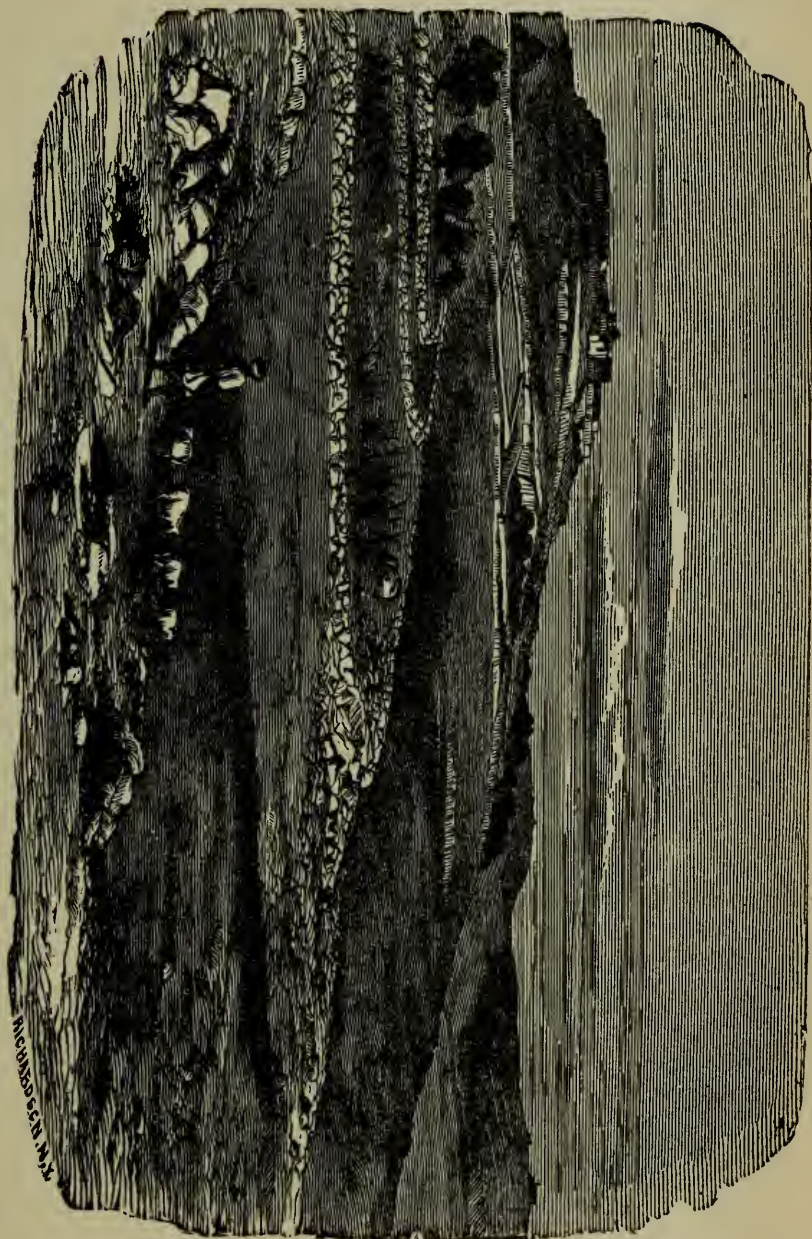
**1-6. DAVID RESCUES KEILAH.** 1. **Then they told David**—rather, "now they had told;" for this information had reached him previous to his hearing (*v.* 6) of the Nob tragedy. **Keilah**—A city in the west of Judah (Joshua, 15, 44), not far from the forest of Hareth. **and they rob the threshing-floors**—These were commonly situated on the fields, and were open to the wind (Judges, 6. 11; Ruth, 3. 2.) 2. **David inquired of the Lord**—most probably through Gad (2 Samuel, 24; 1 Chronicles, 21. 9), who was present in David's camp (ch. 22. 5), probably by the recommendation of Samuel. To repel unprovoked assaults on unoffending people who were engaged in their harvest operations, was a humane and benevolent service. But it was doubtful how far it was David's duty to go against a public enemy without the royal commission; and on that account he asked, and obtained, the Divine counsel. A demur on the part of his men led David to renew the consultation for their satisfaction: after which, being fully assured of his duty, he encountered the aggressors, and, by a signal victory, delivered the people of Keilah from further molestation. 6. **an ephod**—in which was the Urim and Thummim (Exodus, 28. 30). It had, probably, been committed to his care while Ahimelech and the other priests repaired to Gibeah, in obedience to the summons of Saul.

**7-13. SAUL'S COMING, AND TREACHERY OF THE KEILITES.** 7. **It was told Saul that David was come to Keilah**—He imagined himself now certain of his victim, who would be hemmed within a fortified town. The wish was father to the thought. How wonderfully slow and unwilling to be convinced by all his experience, that the special protection of Providence shielded David from all his snares. 8. **Saul called all the people together to war**—not the united tribes of Israel, but the inhabitants of the adjoining districts. This force was raised, probably, on the ostensible pretext of opposing the Philistines, while, in reality, it was secretly to arouse mischief against David. 9. **he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod**—The consultation was made, and the prayer uttered, by means of the priest. The alternative conditions here described have often been referred to as illustrating the doctrine of God's foreknowledge and pre-ordination of events.

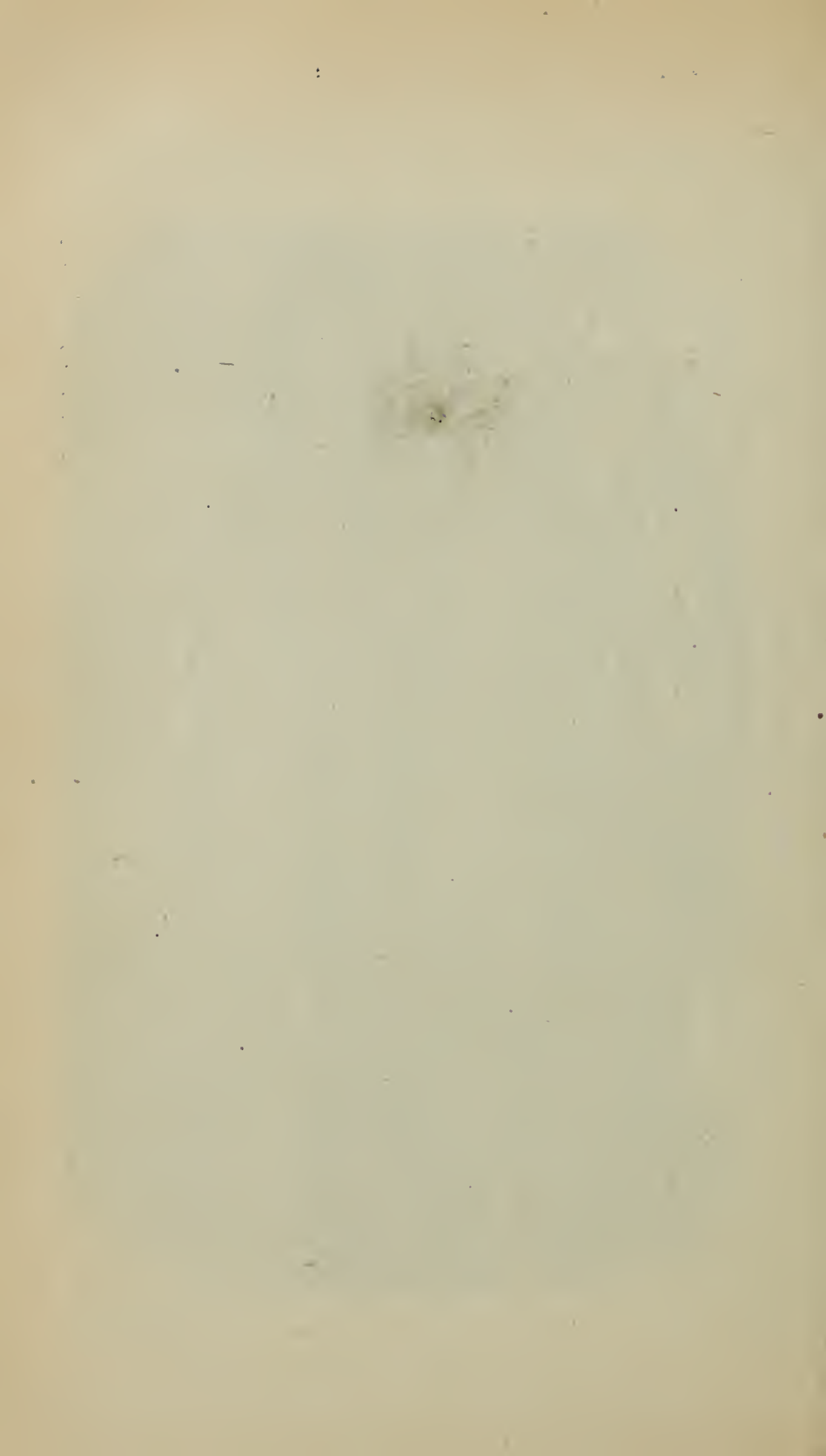
**14-18. DAVID ESCAPES TO ZIPH.** 14, 15. **David abode in the wilderness of Ziph**—A mountainous and sequestered region was generally called a wilderness, and took its name from some large town in the district. Two miles south-east of Hebron, and in the midst of a level plain, is Tell-Ziph, an isolated and conical hillock, about 100 feet high, probably the Acropolis [VAN DE VELDE,] or the ruins [ROBINSON,] of the ancient city of Ziph, from which the surrounding wilderness was called. It seems, anciently, to have been covered by an extensive wood. The country has for centuries lost its woods and forests, owing to the devastations caused by man. 16. **Jonathan went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God**—By the recollection of the divine promises, and of their mutual covenant. What a victory over natural feelings and lower considerations must the faith of Jonathan have won, ere he could seek such an interview, and give utterance to such sentiments. To talk with calm and assured confidence of himself and family being superseded by the man who was his friend by the bonds of a holy and solemn covenant, could only have been done by one who, superior to all views of worldly policy, looked at the course of things in the spirit and through the principles of that theocracy which acknowledged God as the only and Supreme Sovereign of Israel. Neither history nor fiction depicts the movements of a friendship purer, nobler and more self-denying than Jonathan's!

**19-29. SAUL PURSUES HIM.** 19-23. **then came the Ziphites to Saul, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us?**—From the Tell of Ziph a panorama of the whole surrounding district is to be seen. No wonder, then, that the Ziphites saw David and his men passing to and fro in the mountains of the wilderness, and spying him at a distance, when he ventured to show himself on the hill of Hachilah, "on the right hand of the wilderness," *i. e.*, the south side of Ziph, sent in haste to Saul, to tell him of the lurking place of his enemy. [VAN DE VELDE.] 25. **David came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon**—Tell Main, the hillock, on which was situated the ancient Maon (Joshua, 15. 55), and from which the adjoining wilderness took its name, is one mile north, ten east from Carmel. The mountain plateau seems here to end. It is true the summit ridge of the southern hills runs out a long way further toward the south-west; but toward the south-east the ground sinks more and more down to a table land of a lower level, which is called "the plain to the right hand (*i. e.*, to the south) of the wilderness." [VAN DE VELDE.] 29. **David went up from thence, and dwelt in strongholds at En-gedi**—*i. e.*, "the spring of the wild goats or gazelles"—a name given to it from the vast number of Ibexes or Syrian chamois, which inhabited these cliffs on the western shore of the Dead Sea (Josh. 15. 62). It is now called Ain Jiddy. On all sides the country is full of caverns, which might then serve as lurking places for David and his men, as they do for outlaws at the present day. [ROBINSON.]

Gibeon and Nebi Samwil, from N. W.



W. H. B. 1850. N. W.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

**1-7. DAVID IN A CAVE AT EN-GEDI CUTS OFF SAUL'S SKIRT, BUT SPARES HIS LIFE. 2. Saul went... to seek David... upon the rocks of the wild goats**—Nothing but the blind infatuation of fiendish rage could have led the king to pursue his outlawed son-in-law among those craggy and perpendicular precipices, where were inaccessible hiding-places. The large force he took with him seemed to give him every prospect of succeeding. But the overruling providence of God frustrated all his vigilance. **3. he came to the sheep-cotes**—Most probably in the upper ridge of Wady Chareitun. There is a large cave, I am quite disposed to say, *the cave*—lies hardly five minutes to the east of the village ruin, on the south side of the Wady. It is high upon the side of the calcareous rock, and it has undergone no change since David's time. The same narrow natural vaulting at the entrance; the same huge natural chamber in the rock, probably the place where Saul lay down to rest in the heat of the day; the same side vaults, too, where David and his men concealed, when accustomed to the obscurity of the cavern, they saw Saul enter, while blinded by the glare of light outside, he saw nothing of him whom he so bitterly persecuted. **4-7. the men of David said... Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand**—God had never made any promise of delivering Saul into David's hands; but, from the general and repeated promises of the kingdom to him, they concluded that the king's death was to be effected by taking advantage of some such opportunity as the present. David steadily opposed the urgent instigations of his followers to put an end to his and their troubles by the death of their persecutor (a revengeful heart would have followed their advice, but David rather wished to overcome evil with good, and heap coals of fire upon his head); he, however, cut off a fragment from the skirt of the royal robe. It is easy to imagine how this dialogue could be carried on, and David's approach to the king's person could have been effected without arousing suspicion. The bustle and noise of Saul's military men and their beasts, the number of cells or divisions in these immense caverns, and some of them far interior, being enveloped in darkness, while every movement could be seen at the cave's mouth—the probability that the garment David cut from, might have been a loose or upper cloak lying on the ground, and that Saul might have been asleep—these facts and presumptions will be sufficient to account for the incidents detailed.

**8-15. HE URGES THEREBY HIS INNOCENCY. 8-15. David also arose... and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul**—The closeness of the precipitous cliffs, though divided by deep Wadys, and the transparent purity of the air enable a person standing on one rock to hear distinctly the words uttered by a speaker standing on another (Judges, 9. 7). The expostulation of David, followed by the visible tokens he furnished of his cherishing no evil design against either the person or the government of the king,

even when he had the monarch in his power, smote the heart of Saul in a moment, and disarmed him of his fell purpose of revenge. He owned the justice of what David said, acknowledged his own guilt, and begged kindness to his house. He seems to have been naturally susceptible of strong, and, as in this instance, of good and grateful impressions. The improvement on his temper, indeed, was but transient — his language that of a man overwhelmed by the force of impetuous emotions, and constrained to admire the conduct, and esteem the character of one whom he hated and dreaded. But God overruled it for insuring the present escape of David. Consider his language and behaviour. This language — “a dead dog, a flea,” terms by which, like Eastern people, he strongly expressed a sense of his lowliness, and the entire committal of his cause to Him who alone is the judge of human actions, and to whom vengeance belongeth — his steady repulse of the vindictive counsels of his followers, the relentings of heart which he felt even for the apparent indignity he had done to the person of the Lord’s anointed, and the respectful homage he paid the jealous tyrant who had set a price on his head — evince the magnanimity of a great and good man, and strikingly illustrate the spirit and energy of his prayer “when he was in the cave” (Psalm 142).

## CHAPTER XXV.

**1-9. SAMUEL DIES.** **1. Samuel died** — After a long life of piety and public usefulness, having left behind him a reputation which ranks him among the greatest of Scripture worthies. **buried him in his own house at Ramah** — *i. e.*, his own mausoleum. The Hebrews took as great care to provide sepulchers anciently, as people do in the East still, where every respectable family has its own house of the dead; and often this is in a little detached garden, consisting of a small stone building, where there is no rock, resembling a house, which is called the sepulcher of the family — it has neither door nor window. **David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran** — This removal had, probably, no connection with the prophet’s death; but was, probably, occasioned by the necessity of seeking provision for his numerous followers. **The wilderness of Paran** — stretching from Sinai to the borders of Palestine in the southern territories of Judah. Like other wildernesses, it presented large tracts of natural pasture, to which the people sent their cattle at the grazing season, but where they were liable to constant and heavy depredations by the prowling Arabs. David and his men earned their subsistence by making reprisals on the cattle of these freebooting Ishmaelites; and, frequently, for their useful services, they obtained voluntary tokens of acknowledgment from the peaceful inhabitants. **2. in Carmel** — now Kurmul. The district takes its name from this town, now a mass of ruins; and about a mile from it is Tell Main, the hillock on which stood ancient Maon. **the man was very great** — His property consisted in cattle, and he was considered wealthy, ac-

ording to the ideas of that age. 3. **he was of the house of Caleb** — of course, of the same tribe with David himself; but many versions consider Caleb (dog), not as a proper, but a common noun, and render it, "he was snappish as a dog." 4-9. **Nabal did shear his sheep, and David sent ten young men, &c.** — David and his men lurked in these deserts, associating with the herdsmen and shepherds of Nabal and others, and doing them good offices, probably in return for information and supplies obtained through them. Hence, when Nabal held his annual sheep-shearing in Carmel, David felt himself entitled to share in the festival, and sent a message, recounting his own services, and asking for a present. "In all these particulars we were deeply struck with the truth and strength of the Biblical description of manners and customs almost identically the same as they exist at the present day. On such a festive occasion, near a town or village, even in our own time, an Arab Sheikh of the neighbouring desert would hardly fail to put in a word either in person or by message; and his message, both in form and substance, would be only a transcript of that of David." [ROBINSON.]

10-13. **THE CHURLISH ANSWER PROVOKES HIM.** 10-12. **Nabal answered David's servants . . . Who is David? &c.** — Nabal's answer seems to indicate that the country was at the time in a loose and disorderly state. David's own good conduct, however, as well as the important services rendered by him and his men, were readily attested by Nabal's servants. The preparations of David to chastise his insolent language and ungrateful requital are exactly what would be done in the present day by Arab chiefs, who protect the cattle of the large and wealthy sheep masters from the attacks of the marauding border tribes or wild beasts. Their protection creates a claim for some kind of tribute, in the shape of supplies of food and necessaries, which is usually given with great good-will and gratitude; but, when withheld, is enforced as a right. Nabal's refusal, therefore, was a violation of the established usage of the place. 13. **two hundred men abode by the stuff** — This addition to his followers was made after his return into Judah (see ch. 22. 2).

14-35. **ABIGAIL PACIFIES HIM.** 14-18. **Then Abigail made haste** — The prudence and address of his wife was the means of saving himself and family from utter destruction. She acknowledged the demand of her formidable neighbours; but justly considering, that to atone for the insolence of her husband, a greater degree of liberality had become necessary, she collected a large amount of food, accompanying it with the most valued products of the country. **bottles** — goat skins, capable of holding a great quantity. **parched corn** — It was customary to eat parched corn when it was fully grown, but not ripe. 19. **She said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you** — People in the East always try to produce an effect by their presents, loading on several beasts what might be easily carried by one, and bringing them forward, article by article, in succession. Abigail not only sent her servants in this way, but resolved to go in person, *following* her present, as is commonly done, to watch the impression which her

munificence would produce. 23. **she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face**—Dismounting in presence of a superior is the highest token of respect that can be given; and it is still an essential act of homage to the great. Accompanying this act of courtesy with the lowest form of prostration, she not only by her attitude, but her language, made the fullest amends for the disrespect shown by her husband, as well as paid the fullest tribute of respect to the character and claims of David. 25. **Nabal**—signifying *fool*, gave pertinence to his wife's remark. 26. **let thine enemies . . . be as Nabal**—be as foolish and contemptible as he. 29. **the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God**—An Orientalism, expressing the perfect security of David's life from all the assaults of his enemies, under the protecting shield of Providence, who hath destined him for high things. 32-35. **David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord**—Transported by passions, and blinded by revenge, he was on the eve of perpetrating a great injury; and, doubtless, the timely appearance and prudent address of Abigail were greatly instrumental in changing his purpose. At all events, it was the means of opening his eyes to the moral character of the course on which he had been impetuously rushing; and, in accepting her present, he speaks with lively satisfaction as well as gratitude to Abigail for having relieved him from bloodshed.

36-44. **NABAL'S DEATH.** 36. **he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king**—The sheep-shearing season was always a very joyous occasion. Masters usually entertained their shepherds; and even Nabal, though of a most niggardly disposition, prepared festivities on a scale of sumptuous liberality. The modern Arabs celebrate the season with similar hilarity. 37, 38. **in the morning his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him**—He probably fainted from horror at the perilous situation in which he had unconsciously placed himself; and such a shock had been given by the fright to his whole system, that he rapidly pined and died. 39-42. **the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head**—If this was an expression of pleasure, and David's vindictive feelings were gratified by the intelligence of Nabal's death, it was an instance of human infirmity, which we may lament; but perhaps he referred to the unmerited reproach (*v.* 10, 11), and the contempt of God implied in it. **David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to wife**—This unceremonious proceeding was quite in the style of Eastern monarchs, who no sooner take a fancy for a lady than they dispatch a messenger to intimate their royal wishes, that she should henceforth reside in the palace; and her duty is implicitly to obey. David's conduct shows that the manners of the Eastern nations were already imitated by the great men in Israel; and that the morality of the times, which God permitted, gave its sanction to the practice of polygamy. His marriage with Abigail brought him a rich estate. 44. **Michal**—By the unchallengeable will of her father, she who was David's wife was given to another, but she returned, and sustained the character of his wife when he ascended the throne.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

**1-4. SAUL COMES TO THE HILL OF HACHILAH AGAINST DAVID.**

**1. the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah**—This people seem to have thought it impossible for David to escape, and therefore recommended themselves to Saul, by giving him secret information (see ch. 23. 19). The knowledge of their treachery makes it appear strange that David should return to his former haunt in their neighbourhood; but, perhaps, he did it to be near Abigail's possessions, and under the impression that Saul had become mollified. But the king had relapsed into his old enmity. Though Gibeah, as its name imports, stood on an elevated position, and the desert of Ziph, which was in the hilly region of Judea, may have been higher than Gibeah, it was still necessary to descend in leaving the latter place; thence Saul (*v.* 2) "went down to the wilderness of Ziph." **4. David... sent out spies... and David arose and came to the place where Saul had pitched**—Having obtained certain information of the locality, he seems, accompanied by his nephew (*v.* 6), to have hid himself, perhaps disguised, in a neighbouring wood or hill, on the skirts of the royal camp toward night, and waited to approach it under covert of the darkness.

**5-25. DAVID STAYS ABISHAI FROM KILLING SAUL, BUT TAKES HIS SPEAR AND CRUSE.**

**5. Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him**—Among the nomad people of the East, the encampments are usually made in a circular form, the circumference is lined by the baggage and the men, while the chief's station is in the centre, whether he occupied a tent or not. His spear, stuck in the ground, indicates his position. Similar was the disposition of Saul's camp—in this hasty expedition he seems to have carried no tent, but to have slept on the ground. The whole troop were sunk in sleep around him. **8-12. Abishai said to David... God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand**—This midnight stratagem shows the activity and heroic enterprise of David's mind, and it was in unison with the style of warfare in ancient times. **let me smite him... even to the earth at once**—The ferocious vehemence of the speaker is sufficiently apparent from his language, but David's magnanimity soared far above the notions of his followers. Though Saul's cruelty and perfidy, and general want of right principle, had sunk him to a low pitch of degradation, yet that was no reason for David imitating him in doing wrong; besides, he was the sovereign. David was a subject, and though God had rejected him from the kingdom, it was every way the best and most dutiful course, instead of precipitating his fall by imbruing their hands in his blood, and thereby contracting the guilt of a great crime, to wait the awards of that retributive providence which sooner or later would take him off by some sudden and mortal blow. He who, with impetuous haste, was going to exterminate Nabal, meekly spared Saul. But Nabal refused to give a tribute to which justice and gratitude no less than custom entitled David. Saul was under the judicial infatua-

tion of heaven. Thus David withheld the hand of Abishai; but, at the same time, directed him to carry off some things which would show where they had been, and what they had done. Thus he obtained the best of victories over him, by heaping coals of fire on his head. 11. **the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water**—The Oriental spear had, and still has, a spike at the lower extremity, intended for the purpose of sticking the spear into the ground when the warrior is at rest. This common custom of Arab Sheikhs was also the practice of the Hebrew chiefs. **at his bolster**—*lit.*, “at his head;” but, perhaps Saul as a sovereign had the distinguished luxury of a bolster carried for him. A “cruse of water” is usually, in warm climates, kept near a person’s couch, as a draught in the night-time is found very refreshing. Saul’s cruse would probably be of superior materials, or more richly ornamented than common ones, and therefore by its size or form be easily distinguished. 13-20. **then David stood on the top of a hill afar off, and cried to the people**—(see Judges, 9. 7). The extraordinary purity and elasticity of the air in Palestine enable words to be distinctly heard, that are addressed by a speaker from the top of one hill to people on that of another, from which it is separated by a deep intervening ravine. Hostile parties can thus speak to each other, while completely beyond the reach of each other’s attack. It results from the peculiar features of the country in many of the mountain districts. 15. **David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? ...wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king?**—The circumstance of David having penetrated to the center of the encampment, through the circular rows of the sleeping soldiers, constituted the point of this sarcastic taunt. This new evidence of David’s moderation and magnanimous forbearance, together with his earnest and kindly expostulation, softened the obduracy of Saul’s heart. 19. **if the Lord have stirred thee up against me**—By the evil spirit He hath sent, or by any spiritual offenses by which we have mutually displeased Him. **let him accept an offering**—*i. e.*, let us conjointly offer a sacrifice for appeasing his wrath against us. **if they be the children of men**—The prudent meekness and address of David in ascribing the king’s enmity to the instigations of some malicious traducers, and not to the jealousy of Saul himself, is worthy of notice. **saying, Go, serve other Gods**—This was the drift of their conduct. By driving him from the land and ordinances of the true worship, into foreign and heathen countries, they were exposing him to all the seductions of idolatry. 20. **as when one doth hunt a partridge**—People in the East, in hunting the partridge and other game birds, pursue them, till observing them becoming languid and fatigued, after they have been put up two or three times, they rush upon the birds stealthily, and knock them down with bludgeons. [SHAW’S TRAVELS.] It was exactly in this manner that Saul was pursuing David; he drove him from time to time from his hiding-place, hoping to render him weary of his life, or obtain an opportunity of accomplishing his destruction. 25. **So David went on his way**—Notwithstanding this sudden relenting of Saul, David placed no confidence in his professions or promises, but wisely kept at a distance, and awaited the course of Providence.

## CHAPTER XXVII

**1-4. SAUL, HEARING THAT DAVID WAS FLED TO GATH, SEEKS NO MORE FOR HIM.** 1. **David said in his heart, There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines**—This resolution of David's was, in every respect, wrong; 1. Because it was removing from the place where the Divine oracle intimated him to remain (ch. 22. 5); 2. It was rushing into the idolatrous land, for driving him into which he had denounced an imprecation on his enemies (ch. 26. 19); and it was a withdrawal of his counsel and aid from God's people. It was a movement, however, overruled by Providence, to detach him from his country, and to let the disasters impending over Saul and his followers be brought on by the Philistines. 2. **Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath**—The particular description of this king's family creates a presumption that he was a different king from the reigning sovereign on David's first visit to Gath. Whether David had received a special invitation from him, or a mere permission to enter his territories, cannot be determined. It is probable that the former was the case; as from the universal notoriety given to the feud between Saul and David, which had now become irreconcilable, it might appear to Achish good policy to harbour him as a guest, and so the better pave the way for the hostile measures against Israel which the Philistines were at this time meditating.

**5-12. DAVID BEGS ZIKLAG OF ACHISH.** 5. **let them give me a place in some town in the country**—It was a prudent arrangement on the part of David: for it would prevent him being an object of jealous suspicion, or of mischievous plots among the Philistines. It would place his followers more beyond the risk of contamination by the idolatries of the court and capital; and it would give him an opportunity of making reprisals on the freebooting tribes that infested the common border of Israel and the Philistines. 6. **Ziklag**—Though originally assigned to Judah (Joshua, 15. 31), and subsequently to Simeon (Joshua, 19. 5), this town had never been possessed by the Israelites. It belonged to the Philistines, who gave it to David. 8-12. **David went up and invaded the Geshurites**—(see Joshua, 13. 2). **and the Gezerites**—or the Gerizi [GESENIUS] (Joshua, 12. 12), some Arab horde which had once encamped there. **and the Amalekites**—Part of the district occupied by them lay on the south of the land of Israel (Judges, 5. 14; 12. 15). 10. **Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to-day?**—*i. e.*, *raid*, an hostile excursion for seizing cattle and other booty. **David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites**—Jerahmeel was the great-grandson of Judah, and his posterity occupied the southern portion of that tribal domain. **the south of the Kenites**—The posterity of Jethro, who occupied the south of Judah (Judges, 1. 16; Numbers, 24. 21). The deceit practiced upon his royal host, and the indiscriminate slaughter committed, lest any one should escape to tell the tale, exhibit an unfavourable view of this part of David's history.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**1-6. ACHISH'S CONFIDENCE IN DAVID.** 1. **the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare against Israel**—The death of Samuel, the general dissatisfaction with Saul, and the absence of David, instigated the cupidity of those restless enemies of Israel. **Achish said to David, Know thou assuredly that thou shalt go out with me to battle**—This was evidently to try him. Achish, however, seems to have thought he had gained the confidence of David, and had a claim on his services. 2. **surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do**—This answer, while it seemed to express an apparent cheerfulness in agreeing to the proposal, contained a studied ambiguity—a wary and politic generality. **Therefore I will make thee keeper of mine head**—or my life; *i. e.*, captain of my body guard—an office of great trust and high honour. 3. **Now Samuel was dead, &c.**—This event is here alluded to as affording an explanation of the secret and improper methods by which Saul sought information and direction in the present crisis of his affairs. Overwhelmed in perplexity and fear, he yet found the common and legitimate channels of communication with Heaven shut against him; and, under the impulse of that dark, distempered, superstitious spirit which had o'ermastered him, resolved, in desperation, to seek the aid of one of these fortune-telling impostors whom, in accordance with the Divine command (Leviticus, 19. 31; 20. 6, 27; Deuteronomy, 18. 11), he had set himself, formerly to exterminate from his kingdom. 4. **the Philistines pitched in Shunem**—Having collected their forces for a last grand effort, they marched up from the sea coast, and encamped in the “valley of Jezreel.” The spot on which their encampment was fixed was Shunem (Joshua, 19. 18), now Sülem, a village which still exists on the slope of a range called “Little Hermon.” On the opposite side, on the rise of Mount Gilboa, hard by “the spring of Jezreel,” was Saul's army—the Israelites, according to their wont, keeping to the heights, while their enemies clung to the plain.

**7-25. SAUL SEEKS TO A WITCH, WHO, BEING ENCOURAGED BY HIM, RAISES UP SAMUEL.** 7. **Saul said unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit**—The energetic measures which he himself had taken, for extirpating the dealers in magical arts, the profession having been declared a capital offense, his most attached courtiers might have had reason to doubt the possibility of gratifying their master's wish. Anxious inquires, however, led to the discovery of a woman living very secluded in the neighbourhood, who had the credit of possessing the forbidden powers; and to her house he repaired by night in disguise, accompanied by two faithful servants. **En-dor**—“the fountain of the circle”—that figure being constantly affected by magicians—was situated directly on the other side of the Gilboa range, opposite Tabor; so that, in this midnight adventure, Saul had to pass over the shoulder of the ridge on which the Philistines were encamped. 8. **bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee**—This pytho-ness

united to the arts of divination a claim to be considered a necromancer (Deuteronomy, 18. 11); and it was her supposed power in calling back the dead, of which Saul was desirous to avail himself. Though she at first refused to listen to his request, she accepted his pledge, that no risk would be incurred by her compliance—and it is probable that his extraordinary stature, the deference paid him by his attendants, the easy distance of his camp from En-dor, and the proposal to call up the great prophet and first magistrate in Israel—a proposal which no private individual would venture to make, had awakened her suspicions as to the true character and rank of her visitor. The story has led to much discussion whether there was a real appearance of Samuel or not. On the one hand, the woman's profession, which was forbidden by the divine law, the refusal of God to answer Saul by any divinely constituted means, the well-known age, figure and dress of Samuel, which she could easily represent herself, or by an accomplice—his apparition being evidently at some distance, being muffled, and not actually seen by Saul, whose attitude of prostrate homage, moreover, must have prevented him distinguishing the person though he had been near, and the voice seemingly issuing out of the ground, and coming along to Saul—and the vagueness of the information, imparted much which might have been reached by natural conjecture as to the probable result of the approaching conflict;—the woman's representation have led many to think that this was a mere deception. On the other hand, many eminent writers (considering that the apparition came before her arts were put in practice—that she herself was surprised and alarmed; that the prediction of Saul's own death, and the defeat of his forces were confidently made), are of opinion that Samuel really appeared. 24. **the woman had a fat calf, and she hasted and killed it, &c.**—(see Genesis, 18, 1-8). 25. **Then they rose up, and went away that night**—Exhausted by long abstinence, and overwhelmed with mental distress, and now driven to despair, the cold sweat broke on his anxious brow, and he had sunk helpless on the ground. But the kind attentions of the woman and his servants having revived him, he returned to the camp to await his doom.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

1-5. DAVID MARCHING WITH THE PHILISTINES TO FIGHT WITH ISRAEL. 1. **Aphék**—(Joshua, 12. 8), in the tribe of Issachar, and in the plain of Esdraelon. A person who compares the Bible account of Saul's last battle with the Philistines, with the region around Gilboa, has the same sort of evidence that the account relates what is true, that a person would have that such a battle as Waterloo really took place. Gilboa, Jezreel, Shunem, Endor, are all found, still bearing the same names. They lie within sight of each other. Aphék is the only one of the cluster not yet identified. Jezreel on the northern slope of Gilboa, and at the distance of twenty minutes to the east is a large fountain, and a smaller one

still nearer ; just the position which a chieftain would select, both on account of its elevation and the supply of water needed for his troops. [HACKETT'S SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED.] 1. **David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish** — As the commander of the life-guards of Achish, who was general of this invading army of the Philistines. 3. **these days or these years** — He had now been a full year and four months (ch. 27. 7), and also some years before. It has been thought that David kept up a private correspondence with this Philistine prince, either on account of his native generosity, or in the anticipation that an asylum in his territories would sooner or later be needed. 4. **the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him** — It must be considered a happy circumstance in the overruling providence of God to rescue David out of the dangerous dilemma in which he was now placed. But David is not free from censure in his professions to Achish (v. 8), to do what is most probable he had not the smallest purpose of doing — of fighting with Achish against his enemies. It is just an instance of the unhappy consequences into which a false step — a departure from the straight course of duty — will betray every one who commits it. 9. **notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said** — The Philistine government had constitutional checks — or at least the king was not an absolute sovereign ; but his authority was limited — his proceedings liable to be controlled by “the powerful barons of that rude and early period — much as the kings of Europe in the middle ages were by the proud and lawless aristocracy which surrounded them.” [CHALMERS.]

## CHAPTER XXX.

1-5. THE AMALEKITES SPOIL ZIKLAG. 1. **the Amalekites had invaded the south and Ziklag** — While the strength of the Philistine forces was poured out of their country into the plain of Esdraelon, the Amalekite marauders seized the opportunity of the defenseless state of Philistia, to invade the southern territory. Of course, David's town suffered from the ravages of these nomad plunderers, in revenge for his recent raid upon their territory. 2 **they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away captive** — Their conduct seems to stand in favourable contrast to that of David (ch. 27. 11). But their apparent clemency did not arise from humane considerations. It is traceable to the ancient war usages of the East, where the men of war, on the capture of a city, were unsparingly put to death, but there were no warriors in Ziklag at the time, and the women and boys were reserved for slaves, and the old people were spared out of respect to age. 3 **they came to the city, and, behold, it was burnt with fire** — The language implies that the smoke of the conflagration was still visible, and the sacking very recent.

6-15. BUT DAVID, ENCOURAGED BY GOD, PURSUES THEM. 6. **David was greatly distressed** — He had reason, not only on his own personal account (v. 5), but on account of the vehement outcry and insurrectionary threats against him for having left the

place so defenseless, that the families of his men fell an unresisting prey to the enemy. Under the pressure of so unexpected and wide-spread a calamity, of which he was upbraided as the indirect occasion, the spirit of any other leader, guided by ordinary motives, would have sunk; "but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." His faith supplied him with inward resources of comfort and energy, and through the seasonable inquiries he made by Urim, he inspired confidence by ordering an immediate pursuit of the plunderers. 9. **came to the brook Besor**—Now Wady Gaza, a winter torrent, a little to the south of Gaza. The bank of a stream naturally offered a convenient rest to the soldiers, who, through fatigue, were unable to continue the pursuit. 11-15. **they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David**—Old and home-born slaves are usually treated with great kindness. But a purchased or captured slave must look to himself; for, if feeble or sick, his master will leave him to perish, rather than incumber himself with any additional burden. This Egyptian seems to have recently fallen into the hands of an Amalekite, and his master having belonged to the marauding party that had made the attack on Ziklag he could give useful information as to the course taken by them on their return. 14. **the Chere-thites**—*i. e.*, the Philistines (Ezekiel, 25. 16; Zephaniah, 2. 5). 15. **Swear unto me by God**—Whether there was still among these idolatrous tribes a lingering belief in one God, or this Egyptian wished to bind David by the God whom the Hebrews worshipped, the solemn sanction of an oath was mutually recognized.

16-31. **AND RECOVERS HIS TWO WIVES, AND ALL THE SPOIL.** 16. **they were spread abroad upon all the earth**—Believing that David and all his men of war were far away, engaged with the Philistine expedition, they deemed themselves perfectly secure, and abandoned themselves to all manner of barbaric revelry. The promise made in answer to the devout inquiries of David (*v.* 8) was fulfilled. The marauders were surprised and panic-stricken. A great slaughter ensued—the people as well as the booty taken from Ziklag was recovered, and besides a great amount of spoil which they had collected in a wide, free-booting excursion. 21. **David came to the two hundred men which were so faint, that they could not follow**—This unexpected accession of spoil was nearly proving an occasion of quarrel through the selfish cupidity of some of his followers, and serious consequences might have ensued, had they not been prevented by the prudence of the leader, who enacted it as a standing ordinance—the equitable rule—that all the soldiers should share alike (see Numbers, 31. 11, 27). 26. **when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah**—This was intended as an acknowledgment to the leading men in those towns and villages of Judah which had ministered to his necessities in the course of his various wanderings. It was the dictates of an amiable and grateful heart—and the effect of this well-timed liberality was to bring a large accession of numbers to his camp (1 Chronicles, 12. 22). The enumeration of these places shows what a numerous and influential party of adherents to his cause he could count within his own tribe.

CHAPTER XXXI.

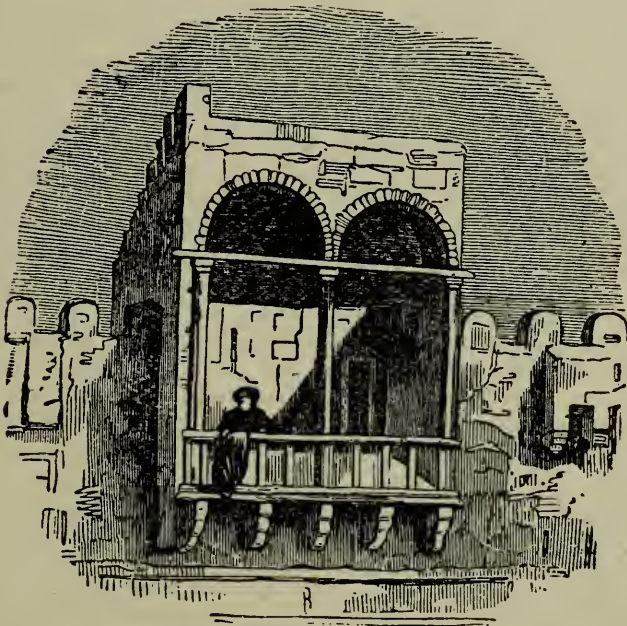
**1-7. SAUL, HAVING LOST HIS ARMY AT GILBOA, AND HIS SONS BEING SLAIN, HE AND HIS ARMOUR-BEARER KILL THEMSELVES.** 1. **Now the Philistines fought against Israel**—In a regular engagement, in which the two armies met (ch. 28. 1-4), the Israelites were forced to give way being annoyed by the arrows of the enemy, which, destroying them at a distance before they came to close combat, threw them into panic and disorder. Taking advantage of the heights of Mount Gilboa, they attempted to rally, but in vain. Saul and his sons fought like heroes; but the onset of the Philistines, being at length mainly directed against the quarter where they were, Jonathan and two brothers, Abinadab or Ishui (ch. 14. 49), and **Melchishua**, overpowered by numbers, were killed on the spot. 3. **the battle went sore against Saul, &c.**—He seems to have bravely maintained his ground for some time longer; but exhausted with fatigue and loss of blood, and dreading that if he fell alive into the enemy's hands, they would insolently maltreat him (Joshua, 8. 29; 10. 24; Judges, 8. 21), he requested his armour-bearer to despatch him, which, however, that officer refused to do. Saul, then, falling on the point of his sword, killed himself; and the armour-bearer, who, according to Jewish writers, was Doeg, following the example of his master, put an end to his life also. They died by one and the same sword, the very weapon with which they had massacred the Lord's servants at Nob. 6. **So Saul died** (see 1 Chronicles, 10. 13, 14; Hosea, 13. 11), **and his three sons**—The influence of a directing Providence is evidently to be traced in permitting the death of Saul's three eldest and most energetic sons, particularly that of Jonathan, for whom, had he survived his father, a strong party would undoubtedly have risen, and thus obstructed the path of David to the throne. **and all his men that same day together**—His servants or body guard (1 Chronicles, 10. 6). 7. **the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley**—Probably the valley of Jezreel—the largest and southernmost of the valleys that run between Little Hermon and the ridges of the Gilboa range, direct into the Jordan valley. It was very natural for the people in the towns and villages there to take fright and flee, for had they waited the arrival of the victors, they must, according to the war usages of the time, have been deprived either of their liberty or their lives.

**8-10. THE PHILISTINES TRIUMPH OVER THEIR DEAD BODIES.** 8. **on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen**—On discovering the corpses of the slaughtered princes on the battle-field, the enemy reserved them for special indignities. They consecrated the armour of the king and his sons to the temple of Ashtaroth, fastened their bodies on the temple of Shen, while they fixed the royal heads ignominiously in the temple of Dagon (1 Chronicles, 10. 10); thus dividing the glory among their several deities. 10. **to the wall**—(2 Samuel, 21. 12)—“the street of **Beth-shan**. The street



was called from the temple which stood in it. And they had to go along it to the wall of the city (see Joshua, 17. 11).

**11-13. THE MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD RECOVER THE BODIES, AND BURN THEM AT JABESH.** 11-13. **the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done**—Mindful of the important and timely services Saul had rendered them, they gratefully and heroically resolved not to suffer such indignities to be inflicted on the remains of the royal family. 12. **they went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons**—Considering that Beth-shan is an hour and a half's distance, and by a narrow upland passage, to the west of the Jordan—the whole being a journey from Jabesh-gilead of about ten miles, they must have made all expedition to travel thither to carry off the headless bodies, and return to their own side of the Jordan, in the course of a single night. **burnt them**—This was not a Hebrew custom. It was probably resorted to on this occasion to prevent all risk of the Bethshanites coming to disinter the royal remains for further insult.



**WALL CHAMBER.**

THE  
SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CHAPTER I.

**1-16. AN AMALEKITE BRINGS TIDINGS OF SAUL'S DEATH. 1. David abode two days in Ziklag**—Though greatly reduced by the Amalekite incendiaries, that town was not so completely sacked and destroyed but David and his 600 followers, with their families, could still find some accommodation. **2-12. a man came out of the camp from Saul**—As the narrative of Saul's death, given in the last chapter, is inspired, it must be considered the true account, and the Amalekite's story a fiction of his own, invented to ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne. David's question, "How went the matter?" evinces the deep interest he took in the war—an interest that sprang from feelings of high and generous patriotism—not from views of ambition. The Amalekite, however, judging him to be actuated by a selfish principle, fabricated a story improbable and inconsistent, which he thought would procure him a reward. Having probably witnessed the suicidal act of Saul, he thought of turning it to his own account, and suffered the penalty of his grievously mistaken calculation (Cf. *v.* 9. with 1 Samuel, 31. 4. 5). **10. the crown**—A small metallic cap or wreath, which encircled the temples, serving the purpose of a helmet, with a very small horn projecting in front, as the emblem of power. **the bracelet that was on his arm**—The armllet worn above the elbow; an ancient mark of royal dignity. It is still worn by kings in some Eastern countries. **13-15. David said unto the young man, Whence art thou?**—The man had at the outset stated who he was. But the question was now formally and judicially put. The punishment inflicted on the Amalekite may seem too severe, but the respect paid to kings in the West must not be regarded as the standard for that which the East may think due to royal station. David's reverence for Saul, as the Lord's anointed, was in his mind a principle on which he had faithfully acted on several occasions of great temptation. In present circumstances it was especially important that his principle should be publicly known; and to free himself from the imputation of being in any way accessory to the execrable crime of regicide, was the part of a righteous judge, no less than of a good politician.

**17-27. DAVID LAMENTS SAUL AND JONATHAN. 17. David lamented with this lamentation**—It has always been customary for Eastern people, on the death of great kings and warriors, to celebrate their qualities and deeds in funeral songs. This inimitable pathetic elegy is supposed, by many writers, to have become a

national war-song, and to have been taught to the young Israelites under the name of "The Bow," in conformity with the practice of Hebrew and many classical writers in giving titles to their songs from the principal theme (Psalm, 22; 56; 45; 60; 80; 100). Although the words "use of" are a supplement by our translators they may be rightly introduced, for the natural sense of this parenthetical verse is, that David took immediate measures for instructing the people in the knowledge and practice of archery, their great inferiority to the enemy in this military arm having been the main cause of the late national disaster. 19. **the beauty of Israel**—*lit.*, the gazelle or antelope of Israel. In Eastern countries that animal is the chosen type of beauty, and symmetrical elegance of form. **how are the mighty fallen!**—This forms the chorus. 21. **let there be no dew, neither let there be rain**—To be deprived of the genial atmospheric influences which, in those anciently cultivated hills, seem to have reared plenty of first-fruits in the corn harvests, was specified as the greatest calamity the lacerated feelings of the poet could imagine. The curse seems still to lie upon them; for the mountains of Gilboa are naked and sterile. **the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away**—To cast away the shield was counted a national disgrace. Yet, on that fatal battle of Gilboa, many of the Jewish soldiers who had displayed unflinching valour in former battles, forgetful of their own reputation and their country's honour, threw away their shields and fled from the field. This dishonourable and cowardly conduct is alluded to with exquisitely touching pathos. 24. **Ye daughters of Israel weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, &c.**—The fondness for dress which anciently distinguished Oriental women is their characteristic still. It appears in their love of bright, gay and divers colours, in profuse display of ornaments, and in various other forms. The inmost depths of the poet's feelings are stirred, and his amiable disposition appears in the strong desire to celebrate the good qualities of Saul as well as Jonathan. But the praises of the latter form the burden of the poem, which begins and ends with that excellent prince.

## CHAPTER II.

1-7. DAVID, BY GOD'S DIRECTION, GOES UP TO HEBRON, AND IS MADE KING OVER JUDAH. 1. **David inquired of the Lord**—By Urim (1 Samuel, 23. 6, 9; 30. 7, 8). He knew his destination, but he knew also that the providence of God would pave the way; and therefore would take no step in such a crisis of his own and the nation's history, without asking and obtaining the Divine direction. He was told to go into Judah, and fix his headquarters in Hebron, whither he accordingly repaired with his now considerable force. There his interests were very powerful; for he was not only within his own tribe, and near chiefs with whom he had been long in friendly relations (see 1 Samuel, 30. 26-31); but Hebron was the capital and center of Judah, and one of the Levitical cities; the inhabitants of which were strongly attached to him,

both from sympathy with his cause ever since the massacre at Nob, and from the prospect of realizing in his person their promised pre-eminence among the tribes. The princes of Judah, therefore, offered him the crown over their tribe, and it was accepted. More could not, with prudence, be done in the circumstances of the country (1 Chronicles, II, 3). 5-7. **David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead**—There can be no doubt that this message of thanks for their bold and dangerous enterprise in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons was an expression of David's personal and genuine feeling of satisfaction. At the same time, it was a stroke of sound and timely policy. In this view the announcement of his royal power in Judah, accompanied by the pledge of his protection to the men of Jabesh-gilead, should they be exposed to danger for their adventure at Bethshan, would bear an important significance in all parts of the country, and hold out an assurance that he would render them the same timely and energetic succour that Saul had done at the beginning of his reign.

8-17. **ABNER MAKES ISH-BOSHETH KING OVER ISRAEL.** 8. **Abner, son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth.** Here was the establishment of a rival kingdom, which, however, would probably have had no existence but for Abner. **Ish-bosheth**—or **Esh-baal** (1 Chronicles, 8. 33; 9. 39). The Hebrews usually changed names ending with Baal into Bosheth (shame); Cf. Judges, 9. 53, with ch. II. 21. This prince was so called from his imbecility. **Abner**—Was first cousin of Saul, commander of the forces, and held in high respect throughout the country. Loyalty to the house of his late master was mixed up with opposition to David, and views of personal ambition in his originating this factious movement. He, too, was alive to the importance of securing the Eastern tribes; so, taking Ish-bosheth across the Jordan, he proclaimed him king at Mahanaim, a town on the north bank of the Jabbok, hallowed in patriarchal times by the Divine presence (Genesis, 32. 2). There he rallied the tribes round the standard of the unfortunate son of Saul. 9. **over Gilead**—used in a loose sense for the land beyond Jordan. **Ashurites**—The tribe of Asher in the extreme north. **Jezeel**—The extensive valley bordering on the central tribes. **over all Israel... but Judah**—David neither could nor would force matters; but was content to wait God's time, and studiously avoided any collision with the rival king, till, at the lapse of two years, hostilities were threatened from that quarter. 12. **Abner... and the servants of Ish-bosheth went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon**—This town was near the confines of Judah, and, as the force with which Abner encamped there seemed to have some aggressive design, David sent an army of observation, under the command of Joab, to watch his movements. 14. **Abner said to Joab, Let the young men arise and play before us**—Some think that the proposal was only for an exhibition of a little tilting match for diversion. Others suppose that both parties being reluctant to commence a civil war, Abner proposed to leave the contest to the decision of twelve picked men on either side. This fight by championship, instead of terminating the matter, inflamed the fiercest passions of the

two rival parties; a general engagement ensued, in which Abner and his forces were defeated and put to flight.

**19-22. ASAHIEL SLAIN.** 19-22. **Asahel pursued after Abner**—To gain the general's armour was deemed the greatest trophy. Asahel, ambitious of securing Abner's, had outstripped all other pursuers, and was fast making on the retreating commander, who, conscious of possessing more physical power, and unwilling that there should be "blood" between himself and Joab, Asahel's brother, twice urged him to desist. The impetuous young soldier being deaf to the generous remonstrance, the veteran raised the pointed butt of his lance, as the modern Arabs do when pursued, and, with a sudden back-thrust transfixed him on the spot, so that he fell, and lay weltering in his blood. But Joab and Abishai continued the pursuit by another route till sunset. On reaching a rising ground, and receiving a fresh reinforcement of some Benjamites, Abner rallied his scattered troops, and earnestly appealed to Joab's better feelings to stop the further effusion of bloodshed, which, if continued, would lead to more serious consequences—a destructive civil war. Joab, while upbraiding his opponent as the sole cause of the fray, felt the force of the appeal, and led off his men; while Abner, probably dreading a renewal of the attack when Joab should learn his brother's fate, and vow fierce revenge, endeavoured, by a forced march, to cross the Jordan that night. On David's side the loss was only nineteen men, besides Asahel. But of Ish-bosheth's party there fell 360. This skirmish is exactly similar to the battles of the Homeric warriors, among whom, in the flight of one, the pursuit by another, and the dialogue held between them, there is vividly represented the style of ancient warfare.

## CHAPTER III.

**1-5. SIX SONS BORN TO DAVID.** 1. **There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David**—The rival parties had varying success, but David's interest steadily increased; less, however, by the fortunes of war, than a growing adherence to him as the divinely designated king. 2. **unto David were sons born in Hebron**—The six sons mentioned had all different mothers. 3. **Chileab**—(his father's picture)—called also Daniel (1 Chronicles, 3. 1). **Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur**—A region in Syria, north of Israel. This marriage seems to have been a political match, made by David, with a view to strengthen himself against Ish-bosheth's party, by the aid of a powerful friend and ally in the north. Piety was made to yield to policy, and the bitter fruits of this alliance with a heathen prince he reaped in the life of the turbulent Absalom. 5. **Egliah, David's wife**—This addition has led many to think that Eglah was another name for Michal, the *first* and *proper* wife, who, though she had no family after her insolent ridicule of David (ch. 6. 23), might have had a child before.

**6-21. ABNER REVOLTS TO DAVID.** 6-11. **Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul**—In the East, the wives and concu

bines of a king are the property of his successor to this extent, that for a private person to aspire to marry one of them would be considered a virtual advance of pretensions to the crown (see 1 Kings, 2. 17). It is not clear whether the accusation against Abner was well or ill-founded. But he resented the charge as an indignity, and, impelled by revenge, determined to transfer all the weight of his influence to the opposite party. He evidently set a full value on his services, and seems to have lorded it over his weak nephew in a haughty, overbearing manner. 12. **Abner sent messengers to David**—Though his language implied a secret conviction, that in supporting Ish-bosheth he had been labouring to frustrate the Divine purpose of conferring the sovereignty of the kingdom on David, this acknowledgment was no justification either of the measure he was now adopting, or of the motives that prompted it. Nor does it seem possible to uphold the full integrity and honour of David's conduct in entertaining his secret overtures for undermining Ish-bosheth, except we take into account the Divine promise of the kingdom, and his belief that the secession of Abner was a means designed by Providence for accomplishing it. The demand for the restoration of his wife Michal was perfectly fair. But David's insisting on it at that particular moment, as an indispensable condition of his entering into any treaty with Abner, seems to have proceeded not so much from a lingering attachment as from an expectation that his possession of her would incline some adherents of the house of Saul to be favourable to his cause. 17-21. **Abner had communication with the elders of Israel**—He spoke the truth in impressing their minds with the well-known fact of David's Divine designation to the kingdom. But he acted a base and hypocritical part in pretending that his present movement was prompted by religious motives, when it sprang entirely from malice and revenge against Ish-bosheth. The particular appeal to the Benjamites was a necessary policy; their tribe enjoyed the honour of giving birth to the royal dynasty of Saul; they would naturally be disinclined to lose that *prestige*. They were, besides, a determined people, whose contiguity to Judah might render them troublesome and dangerous. The enlistment of their interest, therefore, in the scheme, would smooth the way for the adhesion of the other tribes; and Abner enjoyed the most convenient opportunity of using his great influence in gaining over that tribe while escorting Michal to David with a suitable equipage. The mission enabled him to cover his treacherous designs against his master—to draw the attention of the elders and people to David as uniting in himself the double recommendation of being the nominee of Jehovah, no less than a connection of the royal house of Saul, and, without suspicion of any dishonourable motives, to advocate the policy of terminating the civil discord, by bestowing the sovereignty on the husband of Michal. In the same character of public ambassador, he was received and feted by David; and while, ostensibly, the restoration of Michal was the sole object of his visit, he busily employed himself in making private overtures to David for bringing over to his cause those tribes which he had artfully seduced.

Abner pursued a course unworthy of an honourable man ; and though his offer was accepted by David, the guilt and infamy of the transaction were exclusively his.

**22-30. JOAB KILLS ABNER.** 24. **Joab came to the king and said, What hast thou done?**—Joab's knowledge of Abner's wily character might have led him to doubt the sincerity of that person's proposals, and to disapprove the policy of relying on his fidelity. But undoubtedly there were other reasons of a private and personal nature which made Joab displeased and alarmed by the reception given to Abner. The military talents of that general, his popularity with the army, his influence throughout the nation, rendered him a formidable rival ; and in the event of his overtures being carried out, the important service of bringing over all the other tribes to the king of Judah would establish so strong a claim on the gratitude of David, that his accession would inevitably raise a serious obstacle to the ambition of Joab. To these considerations was added the remembrance of the blood feud that existed between them since the death of his brother Asahel (ch. 2. 23). Determined, therefore, to get Abner out of the way, Joab feigned some reason, probably in the king's name, for recalling him, and, going out to meet him, stabbed him unawares ; not within Hebron, for it was a city of refuge, but at a noted well in the neighbourhood. 31. **David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes ; gird you with sack-cloth**—David's sorrow was sincere and profound ; and he took occasion to give it public expression by the funereal honours he appointed for Abner. **King David himself followed the bier**—A sort of wooden frame, partly resembling a coffin, and partly a hand-barrow. 33, 34. **the king lamented over Abner**—This brief elegy is an effusion of indignation as much as of sorrow. As Abner had stabbed Asahel in open war, Joab had not the right of the Goel ; and, besides, had adopted a lawless and execrable method of obtaining satisfaction (see 1 Kings, 2. 5). The deed was an insult to the authority, as well as most damaging to the prospects of the king. But David's feelings and conduct on hearing of the death, together with the whole character and accompaniments of the funeral solemnity, tended not only to remove all suspicion of guilt from him, but even to turn the tide of popular opinion in his favour, and to pave the way for his reigning over all the tribes more honourably than by the treacherous negotiations of Abner.

#### CHAPTER IV.

**1-8. BAANAH AND RECHAB SLAY ISH-BOSHETH, AND BRING HIS HEAD TO HEBRON.** 4. **Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet**—This is mentioned as a reason for his being considered, according to Oriental notions, unfit for exercising the duties of sovereignty. 5. **Rechab and Baanah went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, &c.**—It is still a custom in the East to allow their soldiers a certain quantity of corn, together with some pay ; and these two captains

very naturally went to the palace the day before to fetch wheat, in order to distribute it to the soldiers, that it might be sent to the mill at the accustomed hour in the morning. **7. when they came into the house, he lay on his bed**—Rechab and Baanah came in the heat of the day, when they knew that Ish-bosheth, their master, would be resting on his divan; and it was necessary, for the reason just given, to have the corn the day before it was needed, their coming at that time, though it might be a little earlier than usual, created no suspicion, and attracted no notice. [HARMER.] **gag them away through the plain all night**—*i. e.*, the valley of the Jordan, through which their way lay from Mahanaim to Hebron. **8. They brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David, and said, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth**—Such bloody trophies of rebels and conspirators have always been acceptable to princes in the East, and the carriers been liberally rewarded. Ish-bosheth being a usurper, the two assassins thought they were doing a meritorious service to David by removing the only existing obstacle to the union of the two kingdoms.

**10-12. DAVID CAUSES THEM TO BE PUT TO DEATH. 12. slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet**—As the instruments in perpetrating their crime. The exposure of the mutilated remains were intended as not only a punishment of their crime, but also the attestation of David's abhorrence.

## CHAPTER V.

**1-5. THE TRIBES ANOINT DAVID KING OVER ISRAEL. 1. Then came all the tribes of Israel**—A combined deputation of the leading authorities in every tribe. David possessed the first and indispensable qualification for the throne, *viz.*, that of being an Israelite (Deuteronomy, 17. 15); of his military talent he had furnished ample proof, and the people's desire for his assumption of the government of Israel was farther increased by their knowledge of the will and purpose of God, as declared by Samuel (1 Samuel, 16. 11-13). **3. King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord**—(See 1 Samuel, 10, 25.) This formal declaration of the constitution was chiefly made at the commencement of a new dynasty, or at the restoration of the royal family after a usurpation (2 Kings, 11. 17), though circumstances sometimes led to its being renewed on the accession of any new sovereign (1 Kings, 12. 4). It seems to have been accompanied by religious solemnities.

**6-12. HE TAKES ZION FROM THE JEBUSITES. 6. the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites**—The first expedition of David as king of the whole country, was directed against this place which had hitherto remained in the hands of the natives. It was strongly fortified, and deemed so impregnable that the blind and lame were sent to man the battlements, in derisive mockery of the Hebrew king's attack, and to shout "David cannot come in hither." To understand the full meaning and force of this insulting taunt, it is necessary to bear in mind the depth and steepness of the valley of Gihon, and the lofty walls of the ancient



Canaanitish fortress. 7. **stronghold of Zion** — Whether Zion be the southwestern hill commonly so-called, or the peak now level on the north of the Temple mount, it is the towering height which catches the eye from every quarter: “the hill fort,” “the rocky hold” of Jerusalem. 8. **Whosoever getteth up to the gutter** — This is thought by some to mean a subterranean passage; by others a spout through which water was poured upon the fire which the besiegers often applied to the woodwork at the gateways, and by the projections of which a skillful climber might make his ascent good; a third class render the words, “whosoever dasheth them against the precipice” (1 Chronicles, II. 6). 9. **David dwelt in the fort, &c.** — Having taken it by storm, he changed its name to “the city of David,” to signify the importance of the conquest, and to perpetuate the memory of the event. **David built round about from Millo and inward** — Probably a row of stone bastions placed on the northern side of Mount Zion, and built by David to secure himself on that side from the Jebusites, who still lived in the lower part of the city. The house of Millo was perhaps the principal corner-tower of that fortified wall. 11, 12. **Hiram . . . sent carpenters and masons** — The influx of Tyrian architects and mechanics affords a clear evidence of the low state to which, through the disorders of long-continued war, the better class of artisans had declined in Israel.

13-16. **ELEVEN SONS BORN TO HIM.** 11. **David took him more concubines and wives** — In this conduct David transgressed an express law which forbade the king of Israel to multiply wives unto himself (Deuteronomy, 17. 17).

17-25. **HE SMITES THE PHILISTINES.** 17. **when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel** — During the civil war between the house of Saul and David, those restless neighbours had remained quiet spectators of the contest. But now, jealous of David, they resolved to attack him before his government was fully established. 18. **Valley of Rephaim** — *i. e.*, of giants, a broad and fertile plain, which descends gradually from the central mountains toward the north-west. It was the route by which they marched against Jerusalem. The “hold” to which David went down “was some fortified place where he might oppose the progress of the invaders,” and where he signally defeated them. 21. **there they left their images** — Probably their lares or household deities which they had brought into the field to fight for them. They were burnt as ordained by law (Deuteronomy, 7. 5.) 22. **The Philistines came up yet again** — The next year they renewed their hostile attempt with a larger force, but God manifestly interposed in David’s favour. 24. **the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees** — Now generally thought not to be mulberry trees, but some other tree, most probably the poplar, which delights in moist situations, and the leaves of which are rustled by the slightest movement of the air. [ROYLE.]

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-5. DAVID FETCHES THE ARK FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM ON A NEW CART.** 1. **Again David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel**—(see ch. 5. 1). The object of this second assembly was to commence a national movement for establishing the ark in Jerusalem, after it had continued nearly fifty years in the house of Abinadab (see 1 Chronicles, 13. 1-5). 2. **from Baale of Judah**—A very large force of picked men were selected for this important work, lest the undertaking might be opposed or obstructed by the Philistines. Besides, a great concourse of people accompanied them out of veneration for the sacred edifice. The journey to Baale, which is related (1 Chronicles, 13. 6), is here pre-supposed, and the historian describes the course of the procession *from* that place to the capital. 3. **they set the ark of God upon a new cart**—Or covered wagon (see 1 Samuel, 6. 7). This was a hasty and inconsiderate procedure in violation of an express statute (see Numbers, 4. 14, 15; 7. 9; 18. 3).

**6-11. UZZAH SMITTEN.** 6. **they came to Nachon's threshing-floor**—Or Chidon's (1 Chronicles, 13. 9). The Chaldee version renders the words "came to the place prepared for the reception of the ark," *i. e.*, near the city of David (*v.* 13). **the oxen shook it**—Or stumbled (1 Chronicles, 13. 9). Fearing that the ark was in danger of being overturned, Uzzah, under the impulse of momentary feeling, laid hold of it to keep it steady. Whether it fell and crushed him, or some sudden disease attacked him, he fell dead upon the spot, and this melancholy occurrence not only threw a cloud over the joyous scene, but entirely stopped the procession, for the ark was left where it then was, in the near neighbourhood of the capital. It is of importance to observe the proportionate severity of the punishments attending the profanation of the ark. The Philistines suffered by diseases, from which they were relieved by their oblations, because the law had not been given to them; the Bethshemites also suffered, but not fatally; their error proceeded from ignorance or inadvertency. But Uzzah, who was a Levite, and well instructed, suffered death for his breach of the law. The severity of Uzzah's fate may seem to us too great for the nature and degree of the offense; but it does not become us to sit in judgment on the dispensations of God, and, besides, it is apparent that the Divine purpose was to inspire awe of His majesty, a submission to His law, and a profound veneration for the symbols and ordinances of His worship. 9. **David was afraid of the Lord that day, &c.**—His feelings on this alarming judgment were greatly excited on various accounts, dreading that the displeasure of God had been provoked by the removal of the ark; that the punishment would be extended to himself and people, and that they might fall into some error or neglect during the further conveyance of the ark. He resolved, therefore, to wait for more light and direction as to the path of duty. An earlier consultation by Urim would have led him right at the first, whereas, in this perplexity and distress, he was reaping the fruits

of inconsideration and neglect. 11. **Obededom, the Gittite**—A Levite (1 Chronicles, 15. 18, 21, 24; 16. 5; 26. 4). He is called a Gittite, either from his residence at Gath, or, more probably, from Gath-rimmon, one of the Levitical cities (Joshua, 21. 24, 25).

12-19. **DAVID AFTERWARD BRINGS THE ARK TO ZION.** 12. **it was told King David saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God**—The lapse of three months not only restored the agitated mind of the monarch to a tranquil and settled tone, but led to a discovery of his former error. Having learned that the ark was kept in its temporary resting-place not only without inconvenience or danger, but with great advantage, he resolved forthwith to remove it to the capital, with the observance of all due form and solemnity (1 Chronicles, 15. 1-13). It was transported now on the shoulders of the priests, who had been carefully prepared for the work, and the procession was distinguished by extraordinary solemnities and demonstrations of joy. 13. **when they that bare the ark had gone six paces**—Some think that four altars were hastily raised for the offering of sacrifices at the distance of every six paces (see 1 Chronicles, 15. 26). 14. **David danced before the Lord**—The Hebrews, like other ancient people, had their sacred dances, which were performed on their solemn anniversaries and other great occasions of commemorating some special token of the Divine goodness and favour. **with all his might**—intimating violent efforts of leaping, and divested of his royal mantle—in a state of undress—conduct apparently unsuitable to the gravity of the age or the dignity of a king. But it was unquestionably done as an act of religious homage, his attitudes and dress being symbolic, as they have always been in Oriental countries, of penitence, joy, thankfulness and devotion. 17. **they brought the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it**—The old tabernacle remained at Gibeon (1 Chronicles, 16. 39; 21. 29; 2 Chronicles, 1. 3). Probably not removed because it was too large for the temporary place the king had appropriated, and because he contemplated the building of a temple. 18. **he blessed the people**—In the double character of prophet and king (see 1 Kings, 8. 55, 56). **cake of bread**—Unleavened and slender. **good pieces of flesh**—roast beef.

20-23. **MICHAL'S BARRENESS.** **Michal... came out to meet David, &c.**—Proud of her royal extraction, she upbraided her husband for lowering the dignity of the crown, and acting more like a buffoon than a king. But her taunting sarcasm was repelled in a manner that could not be agreeable to her feelings, while it indicated the warm piety and gratitude of David.

## CHAPTER VII.

1-3. **NATHAN APPROVES THE PURPOSE OF DAVID TO BUILD GOD AN HOUSE.** 2. **The king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar**—The palace which Hiram had sent men and materials to build in Jerusalem had been finished.

It was magnificent for that age, though made wholly of wood: houses in warm countries not being required to possess the solidity and thickness of walls which are requisite for dwellings in regions exposed to rain and cold. Cedar was the rarest and most valuable timber. The elegance and splendour of his own royal mansion, contrasted with the mean and temporary tabernacle in which the ark of God was placed, distressed the pious mind of David. 3. **Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart**—The piety of the design commended it to the prophet's mind, and he gave his hasty approval and encouragement to the royal plans. The prophets, when following the impulse of their own feelings, or forming conjectural opinions, fell into frequent mistakes (see 1 Samuel, 16. 6; 2 Kings, 4. 27).

4-17. **GOD APPOINTS HIS SUCCESSOR TO BUILD IT.** 4-17. **it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan**—The command was given to the prophet on the night immediately following; *i. e.*, before David could either take any measures or incur any expenses. 11. **Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house**—As a reward for his pious purpose, God would increase and maintain the family of David, and secure the succession of the throne to his dynasty. 12. **I will set up thy seed after thee, &c.**—It is customary for the *eldest son born after the father's succession to the throne*, to succeed him in his dignity as king. David had several sons by Bath-sheba born after his removal to Jerusalem (ch. 5. 14-16; Cf. 1 Chronicles, 3. 5). But by a special ordinance and promise of God his successor was to be a son born after this time; and the departure from the established usage of the East in fixing the succession can be accounted for on no other known ground, except the fulfillment of the Divine promise. 13. **He shall build an house for My name; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever**—This declaration referred, in its primary application, to Solomon, and to the temporal kingdom of David's family. But in a larger and sublimer sense, it was meant of David's son of another nature (Heb. 1. 8).

18-29. **DAVID'S PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING.** 18. **Then went King David in and sat before the Lord**—Sitting was anciently an attitude for worship (Exodus, 17. 12; 1 Samuel, 4. 13; 1 Kings, 19. 4). As to the particular attitude, David sat, most probably, *upon his heels*. It was the posture of the ancient Egyptians before the shrines; it is the posture of deepest respect before a superior in the East. Persons of highest dignity sit thus, when they do sit, in the presence of kings; and it is the only sitting attitude assumed by the modern Mohammedans in their places and rites of devotion. 19. **is this the manner of man, O Lord?**—*i. e.*, is it customary for men to show such condescension to persons so humble as I am (see 1 Chronicles, 17. 17). 20. **what can David say more unto Thee?**—*i. e.*, my obligations are greater than I can express.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1, 2. DAVID SUBDUES THE PHILISTINES, AND MAKES THE MOABITES TRIBUTARY.** 1. **David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines**—That is, Gath and her suburban towns (1 Chronicles, 18. 1). That town had been “a bridle” by which the Philistines kept the people of Judah in check. David used it now as a barrier, to repress that restless enemy. 2. **he smote Moab, and measured them with a line**—This refers to a well-known practice of Eastern kings, to command their prisoners of war, particularly those, who, notorious for the atrocity of their crimes, or distinguished by the indomitable spirit of their resistance, had greatly incensed the victors, to lie down on the ground, and then put to death a certain portion of them, which was determined by lot, but most commonly by a measuring line. Our version makes him put two-thirds to death, and spare one-third. The Septuagint and Vulgate make one-half. This war usage was not, perhaps, usually practiced by the people of God; but Jewish writers assert that the cause of this particular severity against this people was their having massacred David’s parents and family, whom he had, during his exile, committed to the king of Moab.

**3-14. HE SMITES HADADEZER AND THE SYRIANS.** 3. **Zobah**—(1 Chronicles, 18. 3). This kingdom was bounded on the east by the Euphrates, and it extended westward from that river, perhaps as far north as Aleppo. It was long the chief among the petty kingdoms of Syria, and its king bore the hereditary title of Hadadezer or Hadarezer (Hadad—helped). **as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates**—In accordance with the promises God made to Israel that he would give them all the country as far as the Euphrates (Genesis, 15. 18; Numbers, 24. 17). In the first campaign David signally defeated him, and, besides a great number of foot-prisoners, took from him an immense amount of booty in chariots and horses; reserving only a small number of the latter, he hamstrung the rest. The reason of this mutilation was, that, horses being forbidden to the Hebrews, both in war and agriculture, it was of no use to keep them; and their neighbours placing much dependence on cavalry, but having for want of a native breed, to procure them by purchase, the greatest damage that could be done to such enemies was to render their horses unserviceable in war (see also Genesis, 49. 6; Joshua, 11. 6, 9). A king of Damascene-Syria came to his succor—but David routed those auxiliary forces also, took possession of their country, put garrisons into their fortified towns, and made them tributary. 9. **Toi, king of Hamath**—Cœle-Syria; northward, it extended to the city Hamath on the Orontes, which was the capital of the country. The Syrian prince being delivered from the dread of a dangerous neighbour, sent his son with valuable presents to David to congratulate him on his victories, and solicit his alliance and protection. **Joram**—Or Hadoram (1 Chronicles, 18. 10). 11. **which also King David did dedicate unto the Lord**—Eastern princes have

always been accustomed to hoard up vast quantities of gold. This is the first instance of a practice uniformly followed by David of reserving, after defraying expenses and bestowing suitable rewards upon his soldiers, the remainder of the spoil taken in war, to accumulate for the grand project of his life — the erection of a national temple at Jerusalem. 13. **David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians** — Instead of Syrians the Sept. version reads Edomites, which is the true reading, as is evident from *v.* 14. This conquest, made by the army of David, was due to the skillful generalship and gallantry of Abishai and Joab (1 Chronicles, 18. 12; Cf. Psalm 60, title). The valley was the ravine of Salt (the Ghor), adjoining the salt mountain, at the south-western extremity of the Dead Sea, separating the ancient territories of Judah and Edom. [ROBINSON.]

15-18. HIS REIGN. 15. **David executed judgment and justice unto all his people** — Though involved in foreign wars, he maintained an excellent system of government at home, the most eminent men of the age composing his cabinet of ministers. 16. **Joab was over the host** — By virtue of a special promise (ch. 5. 8). **recorder** — Historiographer or daily annalist, an office of great trust and importance in Eastern countries. 17. **Zadok . . . and Abiathar . . . were the priests** — On the massacre of the priests at Nob, Saul conferred the priesthood on Zadok, of the family of Eleazar (1 Chronicles, 6. 50), while David acknowledged Abiathar, of Ithamar's family, who fled to him. The two high priests exercised their office under the respective princes to whom they were attached. But, on David's obtaining the kingdom over all Israel, they both retained their dignity; Abiathar officiating at Jerusalem, and Zadok at Gideon (1 Chronicles, 16. 39). 18. **Cherethites** — *i. e.*, Philistines (Zephaniah, 2. 5). **Pelethites** — From Pelet (1 Chronicles, 12. 3). They were the valiant men who, having accompanied David during his exile among the Philistines, were made his body guard.

## CHAPTER IX.

1-12. DAVID SENDS FOR MEPHIBOSHETH. 1. **David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul** — On inquiry, Saul's land steward was found, who gave information that there still survived Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, who was five years' old at his father's death, and whom David, then wandering in exile, had never seen. His lameness (ch. 4. 4) had prevented him from taking any part in the public contests of the time. Besides, according to Oriental notions, the younger son of a crowned monarch has a preferable claim to the succession over the son of a mere heir-apparent; and hence his name was never heard of as the rival of his uncle Ish-bosheth. His insignificance had led to his being lost sight of, and it was only through Ziba that David learned his existence, and the retired life he passed with one of the great families in trans-Jordanic Canaan, who remained attached to the fallen dynasty. Mephibosheth was invited to court, and a place at the royal table on public days was assigned him, as is

still the custom with Eastern monarchs. Saul's family estate, which had fallen to David in right of his wife (Numbers, 27. 8), or been forfeited to the crown by Ish-bosheth's rebellion (ch. 12. 8) was provided (*v.* 11, also ch. 19. 28) for enabling him to maintain an establishment suitable to his rank, and Ziba appointed steward to manage it, on the condition of receiving one-half of the produce in remuneration of his labour and expense, while the other moiety was to be paid as rent to the owner of the land (ch. 19, 29). 10. **Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants**—The mention of his sons and the slaves in his house, was to show that Mephibosheth would be honoured with an equipage "as one of the king's sons." 12. **Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah**—Whether born before or after his residence in Jerusalem, cannot be ascertained. But through him the name and memory of the excellent Jonathan was preserved (see 1 Chronicles, 8. 34, 35; 9. 40, 41).

## CHAPTER X.

1-5. DAVID'S MESSENGERS, SENT TO COMFORT HANUN, ARE DISGRACEFULLY TREATED. 2. **David said, I will show kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me**—It is probable that this was the Nahash against whom Saul waged war at Jabesh-gilead (1 Samuel, 11. 11). David, on leaving Gath, where his life was exposed to danger, found an asylum with the king of Moab; and as Nahash, king of the Ammonites, was his nearest neighbour, it may be, that, during the feud between Saul and David, he, through enmity to the former, was kind and hospitable to David. 3. **the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun**—Their suspicion was not warranted either by any overt act or by any cherished design of David; it must have originated in their knowledge of the denunciations of God's laws against them (Deuteronomy, 23. 3-6), and of David's policy in steadfastly adhering to it. 4. **Hanun took David's servants and shaved off the one-half of their beards**—From the long flowing dress of the Hebrews and other Orientals, the curtailment of their garments must have given them an aspect of gross indelicacy and ludicrousness. Besides, a knowledge of the extraordinary respect and value which has always been attached, and the gross insult that is implied in any indignity offered, to the beard in the East, will account for the shame which the deputies felt, and the determined spirit of revenge which burst out in all Israel on learning the outrage. Two instances are related in the modern history of Persia, of similar insults by kings of haughty and imperious temper, involving the nation in war; and we need not, therefore, be surprised that David vowed revenge for this wanton and public outrage. 5. **Tarry at Jericho**—Or in the neighbourhood, after crossing the fords of the Jordan. 6-14. THE AMMONITES OVERCOME. 6. **when the children of Ammon saw that they sank before David**—To chastise those insolent and inhospitable Ammonites, who had violated the common law of nations, David sent a large army under the command of

Joab, while they, informed of the impending attack, made energetic preparations to repel it by engaging the services of an immense number of Syrian mercenaries. **Beth-rehob**—The capital of the low-lying region between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. **Zoba**—See ch. 8. 3. **of king Maachah**—His territories lay on the other side of Jordan, near Gilead (Deuteronomy, 3. 14). **Ish-tob**—*i. e.*, the men of Tob—the place of Jephthah's marauding adventures (see 1 Chronicles, 19. 6; Psalm 60. title). As the Israelite soldiers poured into the Ammonite territory, that people met them at the frontier town of Medeba (1 Chronicles, 19. 7-9), the native troops covering the city, while the Syrian mercenaries lay at some distance encamped in the fields. In making the attack, Joab divided his forces into two separate detachments—the one of which, under the command of his brother Abishai, was to concentrate its attack upon the city, while he himself marched against the overwhelming host of mercenary auxiliaries. It was a just and necessary war that had been forced on Israel, and they could hope for the blessing of God upon their arms. With great judgment the battle opened against the mercenaries who could not stand against the furious onset of Joab, and not feeling the cause their own, consulted their safety by flight. The Ammonites, who had placed their chief dependence upon a foreign aid then retreated to entrench themselves within the walls of the town. 14. **So Joab returned and came to Jerusalem**—Probably the season was too far advanced for entering on a siege.

15-19. THE SYRIANS DEFEATED. 16. **Hadadazer sent and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river**—This prince had enjoyed a breathing-time after his defeat (ch. 8. 3), and alarmed at the increasing power and greatness of David, as well as being an ally of the Ammonites, levied a vast army not only in Syria, but in Mesopotamia, to invade the Hebrew kingdom. Shobach, his general, in pursuance of this design, had marched his troops as far as Kelam, a border town of Eastern Manasseh, when David, crossing the Jordan by forced marches, suddenly surprised, defeated, and dispersed them. The result of this great and decisive victory was, that all the petty kingdoms of Syria submitted and became his tributaries (see 1 Chronicles, 19).

## CHAPTER XI.

1. **JOAB BESIEGES RABBAH. I. at the time when kings go forth to battle**—The return of spring was the usual time of commencing military operations. This expedition took place the year following the war against the Syrians; and it was entered upon because the disaster of the former campaign having fallen chiefly upon the Syrian mercenaries, the Ammonites had not been punished for their insult to the ambassadors. **David sent Joab and his servants . . . they destroyed the children of Ammon**—The powerful army that Joab commanded ravaged the Ammonite country, and committed great havoc both on the people and their property, until having reached the capital **they besieged Rabbah**—"Rab-



bah" denotes a great city. This metropolis of the Ammonites was situated in the mountainous tract of Gilead, not far from the source of the Arnon. Extensive ruins are still found on its site.

**2-13. DAVID COMMITS ADULTERY WITH BATH-SHEBA.** 2. **It came to pass in an even-tide, that David arose from off his bed**—The Hebrews, like other Orientals, rose at day-break, and always took a nap during the heat of the day, and afterward they lounged in the cool of the evening on their flat-roofed terraces. It is probable that David had ascended to enjoy the open air refreshment earlier than usual. 3. **one said**—*lit.*, he said to himself, "Is not this Bath-sheba," &c. She seems to have been a celebrated beauty, whose renown had already reached the ears of David, as happens in the East, from reports carried by the women from harem to harem. **Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam**—or Ammiel (1 Chronicles, 3. 5,) one of David's worthies (ch. 23. 34), and son of Ahithophel. 4. **David sent messengers, and took her**—The despotic kings of the East, when they take a fancy for a woman, send an officer to the house where she lives, who announces it to be the royal pleasure she should remove to the palace. An apartment is there assigned to her; and, if she is made queen, the monarch orders the announcement to be made that he has made choice of her to be queen. Many instances in modern Oriental history show the ease and dispatch with which such secondary marriages are contracted, and a new beauty added to the royal seraglio. But David had to make a promise, or rather an express stipulation, to Bath-sheba, before she complied with the royal will (1 Kings, 1. 13, 15, 17, 28); for, in addition to her transcendent beauty, she appears to have been a woman of superior talents and address in obtaining the object of her ambition; and in her securing that her son should succeed on the throne; in her promptitude to give notice of her pregnancy; in her activity in defeating Adonijah's natural expectation of succeeding to the crown; in her dignity as king's mother—we see very strong indications of the ascendancy she gained and maintained over David, who, perhaps, had ample leisure and opportunity to discover the punishment of this unhappy connection in more ways than one. [TAYLOR'S CALMET.] 5. **the woman conceived, and sent and told David**—Some immediate measures of concealing their sin were necessary, as well for the king's honour as for her safety, for death was the punishment of an adulteress (Leviticus, 20. 10.) 8. **David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house**—This sudden recall, the manner of the king, his frivolous questions (*v.* 7), and his urgency for Uriah to sleep in his own house, probably awakened suspicions of the cause of this procedure. **there followed him a mess of meat from the king**—A portion of meat from the royal table, sent to one's own house or lodgings, is one of the greatest compliments which an Eastern prince can pay. 9. **But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house**—It is customary for servants to sleep in the porch or long gallery; and the guards of the Hebrew king did the same. Whatever his secret suspicions might have been, Uriah's refusal to indulge in the enjoyment of domestic pleasure, and his determination to sleep "at the door of the king's house,"

arose (*v.* 11) from a high and honourable sense of military duty and propriety. But, doubtless, the resolution of Uriah was overruled by that Providence which brings good out of evil, and which has recorded this sad episode for the warning of the church.

**14-27. URIAH SLAIN.** 14, 15. **David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah . . . Set Uriah in the fore-front of the hottest battle**—The various arts and stratagems by which the king tried to cajole Uriah, till at last he resorted to the horrid crime of murder—the cold-blooded cruelty of dispatching the letter by the hands of the gallant but much-wronged soldier himself, the enlistment of Joab to be a partaker of his sin, the heartless affectation of mourning, and the indecent haste of his marriage with Bath-sheba, have left an indelible stain upon the character of David, and exhibit a painfully humiliating proof of the awful lengths to which the best of men may go when they want the restraining grace of God.

## CHAPTER XII.

**1-6. NATHAN'S PARABLE.** 1. **the Lord sent Nathan unto David**—The use of parables is a favourite style of speaking among Oriental people, especially in the conveyance of unwelcome truth. This exquisitely pathetic parable was founded on a common custom of pastoral people who have pet lambs, which they bring up with their children, and which they address in terms of endearment. The atrocity of the real, however, far exceeded that of the fictitious offense. 5. **the man that hath done this thing shall surely die**—This award was more severe than the case deserved, or than was warranted by the Divine statute (Exodus, 22. 1). The sympathies of the king had been deeply enlisted, his indignation aroused, but his conscience was still asleep; and at the time when he was most fatally indulgent to his own sins, he was most ready to condemn the delinquencies and errors of others.

**7-23. HE APPLIES IT TO DAVID, WHO CONFESSES HIS SIN, AND IS PARDONED.** 7. **Nathan said to David, Thou art the man**—These awful words pierced his heart, aroused his conscience, and brought him to his knees. The sincerity and depth of his penitential sorrow are evinced by the Psalms he composed (32; 51; 103). He was pardoned, so far as related to the restoration of the Divine favour. But as from his high character for piety, and his eminent rank in society, his deplorable fall was calculated to do great injury to the cause of religion, it was necessary that God should testify his abhorrence of sin by leaving even his own servant to reap the bitter temporal fruits. David was not himself doomed, according to his own view of what justice demanded (*v.* 5); but he had to suffer a quadruple expiation in the successive deaths of four sons, besides a lengthened train of other evils. 8. **I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives**—The phraseology means nothing more than that God in his providence had given David, as king of Israel, every thing that was Saul's. The history furnishes conclusive evidence that he never actually mar-

ried any of the wives of Saul. But the harem of the preceding king belongs, according to Oriental notions, as a part of the regalia to his successor. 11. **I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, &c.**—The prophet speaks of God threatening to do what He only permitted to be done. The fact is, that David's loss of character by the discovery of his crimes, tended, in the natural course of things, to diminish the respect of his family, to weaken the authority of his government, and to encourage the prevalence of many disorders throughout his kingdom. 15-23. **the Lord struck the child . . . and it was very sick**—The first visible chastisement inflicted on David appeared on the person of that child, which was the evidence and monument of his guilt. His domestics were surprised at his conduct, and in explanation of its singularity, it is necessary to remark that the custom in the East is to leave the nearest relative of a deceased person to the full and undisturbed indulgence of his grief, till on the third or fourth day at farthest (John, 11. 17) the other relatives and friends visit him, invite him to eat, lead him to a bath, bring him a change of dress, which is necessary, from his having sat or lain on the ground. The surprise of David's servants, then, who had seen his bitter anguish while the child was sick, arose apparently from this, that when he found it was dead, he who had so deeply lamented arose of himself from the earth, without waiting for their coming about him, immediately bathed and anointed himself, instead of appearing as a mourner, and, after worshipping God with solemnity, returned to his wonted repast, without any interposition of others. -

24, 25. SOLOMON IS BORN. 24. **Bath-sheba . . . bare a son and he called his name Solomon**—*i. e.*, peaceable. But Nathan gave him the name of Jedediah, by command of God, or perhaps only as an expression of God's love. This love, and the noble gifts with which he was endowed, considering the criminality of the marriage from which he sprang, is a remarkable instance of Divine goodness and grace.

26-31. RABBAH IS TAKEN. 26. **Joab fought against Rabbah**—The time during which this siege lasted, since the intercourse with Bath-sheba, and the birth of at least one child, if not two, occurred during the progress of it, probably extended over two years. 27. **the city of waters**—Rabbah, like Aroer, was divided into two parts—one the lower town, insulated by the winding course of the Jabbok, which flowed almost round it, and the upper and stronger town, called the royal city. "The first was taken by Joab, but the honour of capturing so strongly a fortified place as the other was an honour reserved for the king himself." 28. **encamp against the city, and take it**—It has always been characteristic of Oriental despots to monopolize military honours; and as the ancient world knew nothing of the modern refinement of kings gaining victories by their generals, so Joab sent for David to command the final assault in person. A large force was levied for the purpose. David, without much difficulty, captured the royal city, and obtained possession of its immense wealth. **Iest I take the city, and it be called after my name**—The circumstance of a city

receiving a new name after some great person, as Alexandria, Constantinople, Hyderabad, is of frequent occurrence in the ancient and modern history of the East. 30. **he took the king's crown from off his head**—While the treasures of the city were given as plunder to his soldiers, David reserved to himself the crown, which was of rarest value. Its great weight makes it probable that it was, like many ancient crowns, not worn, but suspended over the head, or fixed on a canopy on the top of the throne. **the precious stones**—*Heb.*, stone—was a round ball composed of pearls and other jewels, which was in the crown, and probably taken out of it, to be inserted in David's own crown. 31 **he brought forth the people, and put them under saws, &c.**—This excessive severity and employment of tortures which the Hebrews on no other occasion are recorded to have practiced, was an act of retributive justice on a people who were infamous for their cruelties (1 Samuel, II. 2 ; Amos, I. 13).

## CHAPTER XIII.

1-5. AMNON LOVES TAMAR. 1. **Tamar**—Daughter of David by Maachah (ch. 3. 3). 2. **for she was a virgin**—Unmarried daughters were kept in close seclusion from the company of men ; no strangers, nor even their relatives of the other sex, being permitted to see them without the presence of witnesses. Of course, Amnon must have seen Tamar, for he had conceived a violent passion for her, which, though forbidden by the law (Leviticus, 18. 11), yet, with the sanction of Abraham's example (Genesis, 20. 12), and the common practice in neighbouring countries, for princes to marry their half sisters, he seems not to have considered an improper connection. But he had no means of making it known to her, and the pain of that disappointment preying upon his mind, produced a visible change on his appearance and health. 3. **Jonadab, the son of Shimeah**—Or Shammah (1 Samuel, 16. 9). By the counsel and contrivance of this scheming cousin, a plan was devised for obtaining an unrestricted interview with the object of his attachment. **my brother Absalom's sister**—In Eastern countries, where polygamy prevails, the girls are considered to be under the special care and protection of their uterine brother, who is the guardian of their interests and their honour, even more than their father himself (see Genesis, 34. 6-25).

6-27. HE DEFILES HER. 6. **Amnon lay down and made himself sick**—The Orientals are great adepts in feigning sickness, whenever they have any object to accomplish. **let Tamar my sister come and make me a couple of cakes**—To the king Amnon spoke of Tamar as "his sister," a term artfully designed to hoodwink his father, and the request appeared so natural, the delicate appetite of a sick man requiring to be humoured, that the king promised to send her. The cakes seem to have been a kind of fancy bread, in the preparation of which Oriental ladies take great delight, and Tamar, flattered by the invitation, lost no time in rendering the required service in the house of her sick brother,

Cedars of Lebanon.





12-14. **do not force me**—The remonstrances and arguments of Tamar were so affecting and so strong, that had not Amnon been violently goaded on by the lustful passion of which he had become the slave, they must have prevailed with him to desist from his infamous purpose. In bidding him, however, **speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from thee**, it is probable that she urged this as her last resource, saying any thing she thought would please him, in order to escape for the present out of his hands. 15. **Then Amnon hated her exceedingly**—It is not unusual for persons instigated by violent and irregular passions to go from one extreme to another. In Amnon's case, the sudden revulsion is easily accounted for; the atrocity of his conduct with all the feelings of shame, remorse and dread of exposure and punishment, now burst upon his mind—rendering the presence of Tamar intolerably painful to him. 17. **bolt the door after her**—The street door of houses in the East is always kept barred—the bolts being of wood. In the great mansions, where a porter stands at the outside, this precaution is dispensed with, and the circumstance, therefore, of a prince giving an order so unusual, shows the vehement perturbation of Amnon's mind. 18. **a garment of divers colours**—As embroidery in ancient times, was the occupation or pastime of ladies of the highest rank, the possession of these party-coloured garments was a mark of distinction; they were worn exclusively by young women of royal condition. Since the art of manufacturing cloth stuffs has made so great progress, dresses of this variegated description are more common in the East. 19. **Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours . . . laid her hand on her head and went on crying**—*i. e.*, sobbing. Oriental manners would probably see nothing beyond a strong sense of the injury she had sustained, if Tamar actually rent her drawers. But, as her veil is not mentioned, it is probable that Amnon had turned her out of doors without it, and she raised her hand with the design to conceal her face. By these signs, especially the rending of her distinguishing robe, Absalom at once conjectured what had taken place. Recommending her to be silent about it, and not publish her own and her family's dishonour, he took no notice of it to Amnon. But all the while he was in secret "nursing his wrath to keep it warm," and only "biding his time" to avenge his sister's wrongs, and by the removal of the heir-apparent, perhaps further also his ambitious designs. 20. **So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house**—He was her natural protector, and the children of polygamists lived by themselves, as if they constituted different families. 23. **Absalom had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim**—A sheep-shearing feast is a grand occasion in the East. Absalom, proposing to give such an entertainment at his estate in Baal-hazor, about eight miles north-east of Jerusalem, near a town called Ephraim (Joshua, 11, 10); he first invited the king and his court, but the king declining, on account of the heavy expense to which the reception of royalty would subject him, Absalom then limited the invitation to the king's sons which

David the more readily agreed to, in the hope that it might tend to the promotion of brotherly harmony and union.

**28-36. AMNON IS SLAIN.** 28. **Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, When Amnon's heart is merry with wine . . . kill him, fear not**—On a preconcerted signal from their master, the servants, rushing upon Amnon, slew him at the table, while the rest of the brothers, horror-struck, and apprehending a general massacre, fled in affrighted haste to Jerusalem. 29. **every man gat him upon his mule**—This had become the favourite equipage of the great. King David himself had a state mule (1 Kings, I. 33). The Syrian mules are, in activity, strength and capabilities, still far superior to ours. 30. **tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons**—It was natural that, in the consternation and tumult caused by so atrocious a deed, an exaggerated report should reach the court, which was plunged into the depths of grief and despair. But the information of Jonadab, who seems to have been privy to the design, and the arrivals of the other princes made known the real extent of the catastrophe.

**37-39. ABSALOM FLEES TO TALMAI.** 37. **Absalom fled, and went to Talmai**—The law as to premeditated murder (Numbers, 35. 21) gave him no hope of remaining with impunity in his own country; the cities of refuge could afford him no sanctuary, and he was compelled to leave the kingdom, taking refuge at the court of Geshur, with his maternal grandfather, who would, doubtless, approve of his conduct.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**1-21. JOAB INSTRUCTS A WOMAN OF TEKOA. 2. Joab sent to Tekoah and fetched a wise woman**—The king was strongly attached to Absalom; and having now got over his sorrow for the violent death of Amnon, was desirous of again enjoying the society of his favourite son who had now been three long years absent. But a dread of public opinion, and a regard to the public interests, made him hesitate about recalling or pardoning his guilty son; and Joab, whose discerning mind perceived this struggle between parental affection and royal duty, devised a plan for relieving the scruples, and, at the same time, gratifying the wishes, of his master. Having procured a country woman of superior intelligence and address he directed her to seek an audience of the king, and by soliciting his royal interposition in the settlement of a domestic grievance, convinced him that the life of a murderer might in some cases be saved. Tekoah was about twelve miles south of Jerusalem, and six south of Bethlehem; and the design of bringing a woman from such a distance was to prevent either the petitioner being known, or the truth of her story easily investigated. Her speech was in the form of a parable—the circumstances—the language—the manner—well suited to the occasion, represented a case as like David's as it was policy to make it, so as not to be prematurely discovered. Having got the king pledged, she avowed it to be her design to satisfy the royal



conscience, that in pardoning Absalom he was doing nothing more than he would have done in the case of a stranger, where there could be no imputation of partiality. The device succeeded: David traced its origin to Joab, and, secretly pleased at obtaining the judgment of that rough but generally sound-thinking soldier, commissioned him to repair to Geshur and bring home his exiled son. **7. they shall quench my coal which is left**—The life of man is compared in Scripture to a light. To quench the light of Israel (ch. 21. 17), is to destroy the king's life; to ordain a lamp for any one (Psalm 132. 17), is to grant him posterity; to quench a coal, signifies here the extinction of this woman's only remaining hope that the name and family of her husband would be preserved. The figure is a beautiful one; a coal, live, but lying under a heap of embers—all that she had to rekindle her fire—to light her lamp in Israel. **9. the woman said... O king, the iniquity be on me**—*i. e.*, the iniquity of arresting the course of justice and pardoning a homicide, whom the Goel was bound to slay wherever he might find him, unless in a city of refuge. This was exceeding the royal prerogative, and acting in the character of an absolute monarch. The woman's language refers to a common precaution taken by the Hebrew judges and magistrates, solemnly to transfer from themselves the responsibility of the blood they doomed to be shed, either to the accusers or the criminals (ch. 1. 16; 3. 28); and sometimes the accusers took it upon themselves (Matthew, 27. 25). **13-17. Wherefore, then, hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God, &c.**—Her argument may be made clear in the following paraphrase:—You have granted me the pardon of a son who had slain his brother, and yet you will not grant to your subjects the restoration of Absalom, whose criminality is not greater than my son's, since he killed his brother in similar circumstances of provocation. Absalom has reason to complain that he is treated by his own father more sternly and severely than the meanest subject in the realm; and the whole nation will have cause for saying that the king shows more attention to the petition of a humble woman than to the wishes and desires of a whole kingdom. The death of my son is a private loss to my family, while the preservation of Absalom is the common interest of all Israel, who now look to him as your successor on the throne.

**22-33. JOAB SENT TO BRING HIM TO JERUSALEM. 22. To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight**—Joab betrays not a little selfishness amid his professions of joy at this act of grace to Absalom, and flattered himself that he now brought both father and son under lasting obligations. In considering this act of David, many extenuating circumstances may be urged in favour of it; the provocation given to Absalom, his being now in a country where justice could not overtake him; the risk of his imbibing a love for heathen principles and worship; the safety and interests of the Hebrew kingdom; together with the strong predilection of the Hebrew people for Absalom, as represented by the stratagem of Joab; these considerations form a plausible apology for David's grant of pardon to his blood-stained son. But, in granting this pardon, he was acting in the

character of an Oriental despot rather than a constitutional king of Israel. The feelings of the father triumphed over the duty of the king, who, as the supreme magistrate, was bound to execute impartial justice on every murderer, by the express law of God (Genesis, 9. 6; Numbers, 35. 30, 31), which he had no power to dispense with (Deuteronomy, 18. 18. Joshua, 1. 8; 1 Samuel, 10. 25). 25. **But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty**—This extraordinary popularity arose not only from his high spirit and courtly manners, but from his uncommonly handsome appearance—one distinguishing feature of which, seemingly an object of great admiration, was a profusion of beautiful hair. Its extraordinary luxuriance compelled him to cut it “at every year’s end;” *lit.*, “at times,” “from time to time,” when it was found to weigh 200 shekels—equal to 112 oz. Troy; but as “the weight was after the king’s shekel,” which was less than the common shekel, the rate has been reduced as low as 3 lbs., 2 oz. [BOCHART.], and even less by others. 28. **So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king’s face**—Whatever error David committed in authorizing the recall of Absalom, he displayed great prudence and command over his feelings afterward—for his son was not admitted into his father’s presence, but was confined to his own house, and the society of his own family. This slight severity was designed to bring him to sincere repentance, on perceiving that his father had not fully pardoned him, as well as to convince the people of David’s abhorrence of his crime. Not being allowed to appear at court, or to adopt any state, the courtiers kept aloof; even his cousin did not deem it prudent to go into his society. For two full years his liberty was more restricted, and his life more apart from his countrymen while living in Jerusalem than in Geshur; and he might have continued in this disgrace longer, had he not, by a violent expedient, determined (*v.* 30) to force his case on the attention of Joab, through whose kind and powerful influence a full reconciliation was effected between him and his father.

## CHAPTER XV.

1-9. **ABSALOM STEALS THE HEARTS OF ISRAEL. 1. Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him**—This was assuming the state and equipage of a prince. The royal guards, called runners, *avant couriers*, amounted to fifty (1 Kings, 1. 5). The chariot, as the Hebrew indicates, was of a magnificent style; and the horses a novelty among the Hebrew people, only introduced in that age as an appendage of royalty (Psalm, 32. 9; 66. 12), formed a splendid retinue, which would make him “the observed of all observers.” 2. **Absalom rose up early, and stood before the way of the gate**—Public business in the East is always transacted early in the morning—the kings sitting an hour or more to hear causes or receive petitions, in a court held anciently, and in many places still, in the open air at the city gateway; so that, as those whose circumstances led them

to wait on King David required to be in attendance on his morning levees, Absalom had to rise up early and stand beside the way of the gate. Through the growing infirmities of age, or the occupation of his government with foreign wars, many private causes had long lain undecided, and a deep feeling of discontent prevailed among the people. This dissatisfaction was artfully fomented by Absalom, who addressed himself to the various suitors, and, after briefly hearing their tale, gratified every one with a favourable opinion of his case. Studiously concealing his ambitious designs, he expressed a wish to be invested with official power—only that he might accelerate the course of justice, and advance the public interests. His professions had an air of extraordinary generosity and disinterestedness; and, together with his fawning arts in lavishing civilities on all, made him a popular favourite. Thus, by forcing a contrast between his own display of public spirit and the dilatory proceedings of the court, he created a growing disgust with his father's government, as weak, careless, or corrupt, and seduced the affections of the multitude, who neither penetrated the motives nor foresaw the tendency of his conduct.

**7. after forty years**—It is generally admitted that an error has here crept into the text, and that instead of forty, we should read with the Syriac and Arabic versions, and Josephus, "four years;" *i. e.*, after Absalom's return to Jerusalem, and his beginning to practice the base arts of gaining popularity. **my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord**—During his exile in Geshur; and the purport of it was, that, whenever God's providence should pave the way for his re-establishment in Jerusalem, he would offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Hebron was the spot selected for the performance of this vow, ostensibly as being his native place (ch. 3. 3), and a famous high place, where sacrifices were frequently offered before the temple was built; but, really, as being in many respects the most suitable for the commencement of his rebellious enterprise. David, who always encouraged piety, and desired to see religious engagements punctually performed, gave his consent and his blessing.

**10-12. HE FORMS A CONSPIRACY. 10. Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel**—These emissaries were to sound the inclinations of the people—to further the interests of Absalom, and exhort all the adherents of his party to be in readiness to join his standard as soon as they should hear that he had been proclaimed king. As the summons was to be made by the sound of trumpets, it is probable that care had been taken to have trumpeters stationed on the heights, and at convenient stations—a mode of announcement that would soon spread the news over all the country of his inauguration to the throne. **11. with Absalom went two hundred men that were called**—From their quality, reputation and high standing, such as would create an impression that the king patronized the movement; and, being aged and infirm, was willing to adopt his eldest and noblest son to divide with him the cares and honours of government. **12. Absalom sent for Ahithophel**—who he knew was ready to join the revolt, through disgust and revenge, as Jewish writers assert, at David's

conduct toward Bath-sheba, who was his granddaughter. **Giloh**—Near Hebron. **the conspiracy was strong**—The rapid accession of one place after another in all parts of the kingdom to the party of the insurgents, shows that deep and general dissatisfaction existed at this time against the person and government of David. The remnant of Saul's partisans—the unhappy affair of Bath-sheba—the overbearing insolence and crimes of Joab—negligence and obstruction in the administration of justice, were some of the principal causes that contributed to the success of this wide-spread insurrection.

**13-37. DAVID FLEES FROM JERUSALEM.** **14. David said, Arise and let us flee**—David, anxious for the preservation of the city which he had beautified, and confiding in a greater support throughout the country, wisely resolved on leaving Jerusalem. **18. All the Gittites, six hundred men**—These were a body of foreign guards, natives of Gath, whom David, when in the country of the Philistines, had enlisted in his service, and kept around his person. Addressing their commander, Ittai, he made a searching trial of their fidelity in bidding them (*v.* 19) abide with the new king. **23. the brook Kidron**—A winter torrent, that flows through the valley between the city and the eastern side of the Mount of Olives. **24. Zadock and all the Levites bearing the ark**—Knowing the strong religious feelings of the aged king, they brought it to accompany him in his distress. But, as he could not doubt that both the ark and their sacred office would exempt them from the attacks of the rebels, he sent them back with it—not only that they might not be exposed to the perils of uncertain wandering; or he seems to place more confidence in the symbol of the Divine presence, than in God himself; but that, by remaining in Jerusalem, they might render him greater service by watching the enemy's movements. **30. David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet**—The same pathway over that mount has been followed ever since that memorable day. **had his head covered**—with a mourning wrapper. The humility and resignation of David marked strongly his sanctified spirit, induced by contrition for his transgressions. He had fallen, but it was the fall of the upright; and he rose again, submitting himself meekly in the mean time to the will of God [CHALMERS]. **31. David said, Turn, O Lord, the counsel of Ahithophel**—This senator being the mainstay of the conspiracy. **32. when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped**—Looking toward Jerusalem, where were the ark and tabernacle. **Hushai the Archite**—A native of Archi, on the frontiers of Benjamin and Ephraim (Joshua, 16. 2). Comparing the prayer against Ahithophel with the counsel to Hushai, we see how strongly a spirit of fervent piety was combined in his character, with the devices of an active and far-seeing policy.



## CHAPTER XVI.

**1-4. ZIBA, BY FALSE SUGGESTIONS, CLAIMS HIS MASTER'S INHERITANCE.** 1. **Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth met him**— This crafty man, anticipating the certain failure of Absalom's conspiracy, took steps to prepare for his future advancement on the restoration of the king. **a bottle of wine**— A large goat skin vessel. Its size made the supply of wine proportioned to the rest of his present. 2. **The asses be for the king's household to ride on**— The royal fugitives were moving on foot, not from inability to procure conveyances, but as being suitable to their present state of humiliation and penitence. 3. **To-day shall the house of Israel restore the kingdom of my father**— Such a hope might not unnaturally arise at this period of civil distraction, that the family of David would destroy themselves by their mutual broils, and the people re-instate the old dynasty. There was an air of plausibility in Ziba's story. Many, on whom the king had conferred favours, were now deserting him; no wonder, therefore, that in the excitement of momentary feeling, believing, on the report of a slanderer, Mephibosheth to be among the number, he pronounced a rash and unrighteous judgment by which a great injury was inflicted on the character and interests of a devoted friend.

**5-19. SHIMEI CURSES DAVID.** 5. **when King David came to Bahurim**— A city of Benjamin (ch. 3. 16; 19. 16). It is, however, only the confines of the district that is here meant. **Shimei, a man of the family of Saul**— The misfortune of his family and the occupation by David of what they considered their rightful possessions, afforded a natural if not justifiable cause for this ebullition of rude insults and violence. He upbraided David as an ambitious usurper, and charged him, as one whose misdeeds had recoiled upon his own head, to surrender a throne to which he was not entitled. His language was that of a man incensed by the wrongs that he conceived had been done to his house. David was guiltless of the crime of which Shimei accused him; but his conscience reminded him of other flagrant iniquities, and he, therefore, regarded the cursing of this man as a chastisement from heaven. His answer to Abishai's proposal evinced the spirit of deep and humble resignation— the spirit of a man who watched the course of Providence, and acknowledged Shimei as the instrument of God's chastening hand. One thing is remarkable, that he acted more independently of the sons of Zeruiah in this season of great distress than he could often muster courage to do in the days of his prosperity and power. 13. **threw stones at him**— As a mark of contempt and insult. **cast dust**— As if to add insult to injury, clouds of dust were thrown by this disloyal subject in the path of his unfortunate sovereign. **went along the hill's side over against him**— As he descended the rough road on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, "went along the side"— *lit.*, the rib of the hill. 14. **refreshed themselves there**— *i. e.*, in the city of Bahurim. 15-19. **Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king**— Hushai's devotion to David was so well known, that his presence in the

camp of the conspirators excited great surprise. Professing, however, with great address, to consider it his duty to support the cause which the course of Providence and the national will had seemingly decreed should triumph, and urging his friendship for the father as a ground of confidence in his fidelity to the son, he persuaded Absalom of his sincerity, and was admitted among the councillors of the new king.

**20-23. AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL.** 20. **Give counsel among you what we shall do**—This is the first cabinet counsel on record, although the deference paid to Ahithophel gave him the entire direction of the proceedings. 21. **Ahithophel said unto Absalom**—This counselor saw that now the die was cast, half measures would be inexpedient; and to cut off all possibility of reconciliation between the king and his rebellious son, gave this atrocious advice regarding the treatment of the royal women who had been left in charge of the palace. Women being held sacred, are generally left inviolate in the casualties of war. The history of the East affords only one parallel to this infamous outrage of Absalom.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**1-14. AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL OVERTHROWN BY HUSHAI.** 1. **Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom**—The recommendation to take prompt and decisive measures before the royalist forces could be collected and arranged, evinced the deep political sagacity of this counselor. The adoption of his advice would have extinguished the cause of David; and it affords a dreadful proof of the extremities to which the heartless prince was, to secure his ambitious objects, prepared to go, that the patricidal counsel "pleased Absalom well and all the elders of Israel." It was happily overruled, however, by the address of Hushai, who saw the imminent danger to which it would expose the king and the royal cause. He dwelt upon the war-like character and military experience of the old king—represented him and his adherents as mighty men who would fight with desperation, and who, most probably, secured in some stronghold, would be beyond reach, while the smallest loss of Absalom's men at the outset might be fatal to the success of the conspiracy. But his dexterity was chiefly displayed in that part of his counsel which recommended a general levy throughout the country; and that Absalom should take command of it in person—thereby flattering at once the pride and ambition of the usurper. The bait was caught by the vain-glorious and wicked prince. 12. **we will light upon him as the dew falleth upon the ground**—No image could have symbolized the sudden onset of an enemy so graphically to an Oriental mind, as the silent, irresistible, and rapid descent of this natural moisture on every field and blade of grass. 13. **All Israel shall bring ropes to that city**—In besieging a town, hooks or cranes were often thrown upon the walls or turrets, by which, with ropes attached to them, the besiegers, uniting all their force, pulled down the fortifications in a mass of ruins. 14. **The counsel of**

**Hushai is better than the counsels of Ahithophel**—The reasons specified being extremely plausible, and expressed in the strong hyperbolic language suited to dazzle an Oriental imagination, the council declared in favor of Hushai's advice; and their resolution was the immediate cause of the discomfiture of the rebellion, although the council itself was only a link in the chain of causation held by the controlling hand of the Lord.

**15-22. SECRET INTELLIGENCE SENT TO DAVID.** 16. **send quickly, and tell David**—Apparently doubting that his advice would be followed, Hushai ordered secret intelligence to be conveyed to David of all that transpired, with an urgent recommendation to cross the Jordan without a moment's delay, lest Ahithophel's address and influence might produce a change on the prince's mind, and an immediate pursuit be determined on. 17. **by En-rogel**—The fuller's well, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, below the junction of the valley of Hinnom with that of Jehosaphat. 18. **and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court**—The court was that of the house, and the well an empty cistern. All the houses of the better class are furnished with such reservoirs. Nothing could more easily happen, than that one of these wells, in consequence of a deficiency of water, should become dry; and it would then answer as a place of retreat, such as David's friends found in the man's house at Bahurim. The spreading of a covering over the well's mouth, for the drying of corn, is a common practice.

**23-29. AHITHOPHEL HANGS HIMSELF.** 23. **when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed**—His vanity was wounded, his pride mortified on finding that his ascendancy was gone—but that chagrin was aggravated by other feelings—a painful conviction that through the delay which had been resolved on, the cause of Absalom was lost. Hastening home, therefore, he arranged his private affairs, and, knowing that the storm of retributive vengeance would fall chiefly upon him as the instigator and prop of the rebellion, he hanged himself. It may be remarked that the Israelites did not, at that time, refuse the rites of sepulture even to those who died by their own hands. He had an imitator in Judas, who resembled him in his treason, as well as in his infamous end.

**24. Then David came to Mahanaim**—In the high Eastern country of Gilead, the seat of Ish-bosheth's government. **Absalom passed over Jordan**—It is not said how long an interval elapsed, but there must have been sufficient time to make the intended levy throughout the kingdom. 25. **Amasa**—By the genealogy it appears that this captain stood in the same relation to David as Joab, both being his nephews. Of course, Amasa was Absalom's cousin, and though himself an Israelite his father was an Ishmaelite (1 Chronicles, 2. 17). Nahash is thought by some to be another name of Jesse, or, according to others, the name of Jesse's wife. 27. **when David was come to Mahanaim**—The necessities of the king and his followers were hospitably ministered to by three chiefs, whose generous loyalty is recorded with honour in the sacred narrative. **Shobi**—Must have been brother of Hanun. Disapproving, probably of that young king's outrage upon the

Israelite ambassadors, he had been made governor of Ammon by David on the conquest of that country. **Machir**—(see ch. 9. 4). Supposed by some to have been brother of Bathsheba, and **Barzillai**, a wealthy old grandee, whose great age and infirmities made his loyal devotion to the distressed monarch peculiarly affecting. The supplies they brought, which, besides beds for the weary, consisted of the staple produce of their rich lands and pastures, may be classified as follows: eatables—wheat, barley, flour, beans, lentiles, sheep and cheese; drinkables—“honey and butter,” or cream, which, being mixed together, forms a thin diluted beverage, light, cool and refreshing. Being considered a luxurious refreshment (Song, 4. 11), the supply of it shows the high respect that was paid to David by his loyal and faithful subjects at Mahanaim. 29. **in the wilderness**—Spread out beyond the cultivated tablelands into the steppes of Hauran.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1-4. **DAVID REVIEWING THE ARMIES.** 1. **David numbered the people that were with him**—The hardy mountaineers of Gilead came in great numbers at the call of their chieftains, so that, although without money to pay any troops, David soon found himself at the head of a considerable army. A pitched battle was now inevitable. But so much depending on the life of the king, he was not allowed to take the field in person; and therefore divided his forces into three detachments under Joab, Abishai and Ittai, the commander of the foreign guards.

5-13. **GIVES THEM CHARGE OF ABSALOM.** 6. **wood of Ephraim**—This wood, of course, was on the east of Jordan. Its name was derived, according to some, from the slaughter of the Ephraimites by Jephthah—according to others, from the connection of blood with the trans-Jordanic Manasseh. 5. **Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom**—This affecting charge, which the king gave to his generals, proceeded not only from his overweening affection for his children, but from his consciousness that this rebellion was the chastisement of his own crimes, Absalom being merely an instrument in the hand of retributive Providence;—and also from his piety, lest the unhappy prince should die with his sins unrepent of. 7. **the people of Israel were slain**—This designation, together with the immense slaughter after mentioned, shows the large extent to which the people were enlisted in this unhappy civil contest. 8. **the wood devoured more people than the sword**—The thick forest of oaks and terebinths, by obstructing the flight, greatly aided the victors in the pursuit. 9. **Absalom met the servants of David**—Or was overtaken. “It is necessary to be continually on one’s guard against the branches of trees; and when the hair is worn in large locks floating down the back, as was the case with a young man of the party to which I belonged, any thick boughs interposing in the path might easily dislodge a rider from his seat and catch hold of his flowing hair. [HARTLEY.] Some, however, think that the sacred



historian points not so much to the hair as to the *head* of Absalom, which, being caught while running between two branches, was inclosed so firmly that he could not disengage himself from the hold, nor make use of his hands. **the mule that was under him went away**—The Orientals not having saddles like us, do not sit so firmly on the beasts they ride. Absalom, quitting his hold of the bridle, apparently to release himself when caught in the oak, the mule escaped. 11. **Joab said unto the man that told him, I would have given thee ten shekels of silver and a girdle**—*i. e.*, would have raised him from the ranks to the status of a commissioned officer. Besides a sum of money, a girdle, curiously and richly wrought, was among the ancient Hebrews a mark of honour, and sometimes bestowed as a reward of military merit. The soldier, however, who may be taken as a fair sample of David's faithful subjects, had so great a respect for the king's will, that no prospect of reward would have tempted him to lay violent hands on Absalom. But Joab's stern sense of public duty, which satisfied him that there could be neither safety to the king, nor peace to the kingdom, nor security to him and other loyal subjects, so long as this turbulent prince lived, overcame his sensibilities, and looking upon the charge given to the generals as more befitting a parent than a prince, he ventured to disobey it.

14-32. **HE IS SLAIN BY JOAB.** 14. **he took three darts . . . and thrust them through the heart of Absalom**—The deed, partially done by Joab, was completed by his body-guard. Being a violation of the expressed wish, as well as of all the fond paternal feelings of David, it must have been deeply offensive to the king, nor was it ever forgotten (1 Kings, 2. 5); and yet there is the strongest reason for believing that Joab, in doing it, was actuated by a sincere regard to the interests of David, both as a man and a monarch. 16. **Joab blew the trumpet . . . and held back the people**—Knowing that by the death of the usurper there was no occasion for further bloodshed, he put an end to the pursuit, and thereby evinced the temperate policy of his conduct. However harsh and unfeeling to the king Joab may appear, there can be no doubt that he acted the part of a wise statesman in regarding the peace and welfare of the kingdom more than his master's private inclinations, which were opposed to strict justice as well as his own interests. Absalom deserved to die by the Divine law (Deuteronomy, 21. 18, 21), as well as being an enemy to his king and country, and no time was more fitting than when he met that death in open battle. 17. **They took Absalom and cast him into a great pit, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him**—The people of the East indicate their detestation of the memory of an infamous person by throwing stones at the place where he is buried. The heap is increased by the gradual accumulation of stones which passers-by add to it. 18. **Absalom in his life-time had . . . reared for himself a pillar**—*It., hand.* In the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the east of Jerusalem, is a tomb or cenotaph, said to be this "pillar" or monument; it is twenty-four feet square, dome-topped, and reaches forty feet in height. This may occupy the spot, but cannot itself be the work of Absalom, as it evidently bears the style of a later

architecture. 19. **Then said Ahimaaz... Let me... run and bear the king tidings**—The reasons of Joab's declining to accept Ahimaaz's offer to bear intelligence of the victory to David, and afterward letting him go along with another, are variously stated by commentators—but they are of no importance, and yet the alacrity of the messengers, as well as the eager excitement of the expectants, is graphically described. 23. **by the way of the plain**—Or "ciccar," circle. This word is only used elsewhere in connection with the valley of the Jordan. It is possible that there may have been a place or region so called on the table lands of Gilead, as the Septuagint seem to indicate. Or Manhanaim may have been so situated, with regard to the battle-field, as to be more easily accessible by a descent to the plain of the Jordan, than over the hills themselves. Or the word may signify (as EWALD explains) a manner of quick running. [STANLEY.] 24. **David sat between the two gates**—*i. e.*, in the tower-house on the wall that overhung the gate of Mahanaim; near it was a watch-tower, on which a sentinel was posted, as in times of war, to notify every occurrence. The delicacy of Ahimaaz's communication was made up by the unmistakable plainness of Cush's. The death of Absalom was a heavy trial, and it is impossible not to sympathize with the outbursts of feeling by which David showed that all thoughts of the victory he had won as a king were completely sunk in the painful loss he had sustained as a father. The extraordinary ardour and strength of his affection for this worthless son breaks out in the redundancy and vehemence of his mournful ejaculations

## CHAPTER XIX.

1-8. JOAB CAUSES THE KING TO CEASE MOURNING. 3. **The people gat them by stealth to the city**—The rumour of the king's disconsolate condition spread a universal and unseasonable gloom. His troops, instead of being welcomed back, as a victorious army always was, with music and other demonstrations of public joy, slunk secretly and silently into the city, as if ashamed after the commission of some crime. 4. **the king covered his face**—One of the usual signs of mourning (see ch. 15. 30). 5. **Thou hast shamed the faces of all thy servants**—By withdrawing thyself to indulge in grief, as if their services were disagreeable and their devotion irksome to thee. Instead of hailing their return with joy and gratitude, thou hast refused them the small gratification of seeing thee. Joab's remonstrance was right and necessary, but it was made with harshness. He was one of those persons who spoil their important services by the insolence of their manners; and who always awaken a feeling of obligation in those to whom they render any services. He spoke to David in a tone of hauteur that ill became a subject to show toward his king. 7. **Now arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants**—The king felt the truth of Joab's reprimand, but the threat by which it was enforced, grounded as it was on the gen-

eral's unbounded popularity with the army, showed him to be a dangerous person; and that circumstance, together with the violation of an express order to deal gently for his sake with Absalom, produced in David's mind a settled hatred, which was strongly manifested in his last directions to Solomon. **8. the king arose, and sat in the gate**—Appeared daily in the usual place for the hearing of causes. **all the people came before the king**—*i. e.*, the loyal natives who had been faithful to his government, and fought in his cause. **Israel had fled**—*i. e.*, the adherents of Absalom, who, on his defeat, had dispersed and saved themselves by flight.

**9-43. THE ISRAELITES BRING THE KING BACK, &c.** **9. all the people were at strife throughout the tribes of Israel**—The kingdom was completely disorganized. The sentiments of three different parties are represented in verses 9 and 10; the royalists—the adherents of Absalom, who had been very numerous, and those who were indifferent to the Davidic Dynasty. In these circumstances the king was right in not hastening back, as a conqueror, to re-ascend his throne. A re-election was, in some measure, necessary. He remained for some time on the other side of Jordan, in expectation of being invited back. That invitation was given, without, however, the concurrence of Judah; and David, disappointed and vexed by his own tribe's apparent lukewarmness, dispatched the two high priests to rouse the Judahites to take a prominent interest in his cause. It was the act of a skillful politician, as, Hebron having been the seat of the rebellion, it was graceful on his part to encourage their return to allegiance and duty; and it was an appeal to their honour not to be the last of the tribes. But this separate message, and the preference given to them, occasioned an outburst of jealousy among the other tribes that was nearly followed by fatal consequences. **13. And say ye to Amasa, &c.**—This also was a dexterous stroke of policy. David was fully alive to the importance for extinguishing the rebellion—of withdrawing from that cause the only leader who could keep it alive: and he, therefore, secretly intimated his intention to raise Amasa to the command of the army in room of Joab, whose overbearing haughtiness had become intolerable. The king justly reckoned that, from natural temper as well as gratitude for the royal pardon, he would prove a more tractable servant; and David, doubtless, intended in all sincerity to fulfill this promise. But Joab managed to retain his high position (see ch. 20). **14. he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah**—*i. e.*, Amasa, who had been won over, used his great influence in re-attaching the whole tribe of Judah to the interest of David. **15. Judah came to Gilgal**—As the most convenient place where preparations could be made for bringing the king and court over the Jordan. **16. Shimel . . . and a thousand men of Benjamin with him**—This display of his followers was to show what force he could raise against or in support of the king. Expressing the deepest regret for his former outrageous conduct, he was pardoned on the spot, and, although the son of Zeruah urged the expediency of making this chief a public example, his officiousness was repulsed by David with magnanimity, and

with the greater confidence that he felt himself now re-established in the kingdom (see 1 Kings, 2. 8, 9). 17. **Ziba, the servant of the house of Saul**—He had deceived his master; and when ordered to make ready the ass for the lame prince to go and meet the king, slipped away by himself to pay court first; so that Mephibosheth, being lame, had to remain in Jerusalem till the king's arrival. 18. **ferry boat**—probably rafts, which are still used on that part of the river. 20. **I am come the first of all the house of Joseph**—*i. e.*, before all the rest of *Israel* (Psalm 77, 15; 80. 1; 81. 5; Zechariah, 10. 6.). 24-30. **Mephibosheth came down to meet the king**—The reception given to Mephibosheth was less creditable to David. The sincerity of that prince's grief for the misfortunes of the king cannot be doubted. "He had neither dressed his feet"—not taken the bath, "nor trimmed his beard." The Hebrews cut off the hair on the upper lip (see Leviticus, 13. 45) and cheeks, but carefully cherished it on the chin from ear to ear. Besides dying it black or red colours, which, however, is the exception, and not the rule in the East, there are various modes of trimming it: they train it into a massy, bushy form, swelling and round; or they terminate it like a pyramid, in a sharp point. Whatever the mode, it is always trimmed with the greatest care; and they usually carry a small comb for the purpose. The neglect of this attention to his beard was an undoubted proof of the depth of Mephibosheth's grief. The king seems to have received him upbraidingly, and not to have been altogether sure of either his guilt or innocence. It is impossible to commend the cavalier treatment, any more than to approve the partial award; of David in this case. If he were too hurried and distracted by the pressure of circumstances to inquire fully into the matter, he should have postponed his decision; for if by "dividing the land" (*v.* 29) he meant that the former arrangement should be continued by which Mephibosheth was acknowledged the proprietor, and Ziba the farmer, it was a hardship inflicted on the owner to fix him with a tenant who had so grossly slandered him. But if by "dividing the land," they were now to share alike, the injustice of the decision was greatly increased. In any view, the generous disinterested spirit displayed by Mephibosheth was worthy a son of the noble-hearted Jonathan. 31. **Brazilia the Gileadite**—The rank, great age, and chivalrous devotion of this Gileadite chief wins our respect. His declining to go to court—his recommendation of his son—his convoy across the Jordan, and his parting scene with the king, are interesting incidents. What mark of royal favour was bestowed on Chimham has not been recorded; but it is probable that David gave a great part of his personal patrimony in Bethlehem to Chimham and his heirs in perpetuity (Jeremiah, 41, 17). 35. **the voice of singing men and singing women**—Bands of professional musicians form a prominent appendage to the courts of Oriental princes. 37. **buried by the grave of my father and my mother**—This is an instance of the strong affection of people in the East toward the places of sepulture appropriated to their families. 40-43. **the king went on to Gilgal, and all the people of Judea conducted the king, and half**

**the people of Israel**—Whether from impatience to move on, or from some other cause, David did not wait till all the tribes had arrived to conduct him on his return to the capital. The procession began as soon as Amasa had brought the Judahite escort, and the preference given to this tribe produced a bitter jealousy, which was nearly kindling a civil war fiercer than that which had just ended. A war of words ensued between the tribes—Israel resting their argument on their superior numbers: “they had ten parts in the king;” whereas, Judah had no more than one. Judah grounded their right to take the lead, on the ground of their nearer relationship to the king. This was a claim dangerous to the house of David; and it shows the seeds were already sown of that tribunal dissension which, ere long, led to the dismemberment of the kingdom.

## CHAPTER XX.

**1-9. SHEBA MAKES A PARTY IN ISRAEL.** 1. **Sheba . . . a Benjamite**—Though nothing is known of this man, he must have been a person of considerable power and influence, ere he could have raised so sudden and extensive a sedition. He belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, where the adherents of Saul’s dynasty were still numerous, and, perceiving the strong disgust of the other tribes with the part assumed by Judah in the Restoration, his ill-designing heart resolved to turn it to the overthrow of David’s authority in Israel. **every man to his tent**--This proverbial expression may have had its foundation in the fact, that many of the Israelite peasantry adhered to the custom of the patriarchs who tilled land, and yet lived in tents, as Syrian peasants often do still. This was the usual watchword of national insurrection, and from the actual temper of the people, it was followed by effects beyond what he probably anticipated. 2. **from Jordan even to Jerusalem**—The quarrel had broken out shortly after the crossing of the Jordan, between Judah and the other tribes who withdrew; so that Judah was left nearly alone to conduct the king to the metropolis. 3. **the king took the ten women his concubines**—Jewish writers say that the widowed queens of Hebrew monarchs were not allowed to marry again, but were obliged to pass the rest of their lives in strict seclusion. David treated his concubines in the same manner after the outrage committed on them by Absalom. They were not divorced, for they were guiltless; but they were no longer publicly recognized as his wives; nor was their confinement to a sequestered life a very heavy doom, in a region where women have never been accustomed to go much abroad. 4. **Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days**—Amasa is now installed in the command which David had promised him. The revolt of the ten tribes probably hastened the public declaration of this appointment which he hoped would be popular with them, and Amasa was ordered within three days to levy a force from Judah sufficient to put down the insurrection. The appointment was a blunder, and the king soon perceived his error. The specified time passed, but

Amasa could not muster the men. Dreading the loss of time, the king gave the commission to Abishai, and not to Joab—a new affront, which, no doubt, wounded the pride of the stern and haughty old general. But he hastened with his attached soldiers to go as second to his brother, determined to take the first opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on his successful rival. 8. **Amasa went before them**—Having collected some forces, he by a rapid march overtook the expedition at Gibeon, and assumed the place of commander, in which capacity he was saluted, among others, by Joab. **Joab's garment, that he had put on, was girded unto him**—In the fashion of travelers and soldiers. **a sword . . . and, as he went forth, it fell out**—*i. e.*, out of the scabbard. According to Josephus, he let it drop on purpose as he was accosting Amasa; that, stooping, as it were, accidentally, to pick it up, he might salute the new general with the naked sword in his hand, without exciting any suspicion of his design. "He went forth," in a ceremonious manner, to meet Amasa, now commander-in-chief, in order to seem to render to that officer, whom he considered as usurping his post, a conspicuous honour and homage. 9. **took him by the beard with the right hand to kiss him**—This act, common with two friends on meeting, when one of them was come from a journey indicates respect as well as kindness, and the performance of it evinced the deep hypocrisy of Joab, who thereby put Amasa off his guard. No wonder, then, that while this act of friendly gratulation after long absence occupied Amasa's attention, he did not perceive the sword that was in Joab's *left* hand. The action of Joab was indeed a high compliment, but neither suspicious nor unusual; and to this compliment, Amasa paying attention, and no doubt returning it with suitable politeness, he could little expect the fatal event that Joab's perfidy produced.

10-13. **AMASA IS SLAIN. 10. smote him in the fifth rib**—The seat of the liver and bowels, where wounds are mortal. **struck him not again**—*i. e.*, despatched him at the first blow. 11. **He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab**—It is a striking proof of Joab's unrivaled influence over the army, that, with this villainous murder perpetrated before their eyes, they unanimously followed him as their leader in pursuit of Sheba. A soldier conjoined his name with David's, and such a magic spell was in the word "Joab," that all the people "went on"—Amasa's men as well as the rest. The conjunction of these two names is very significant. It shows that the one could not afford to do without the other—neither Joab to rebel against David, nor David to get rid of Joab, though hating him.

14, 15. **JOAB PURSUES SHEBA UNTO ABEL. 14. he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel**—Beating up for recruits. But there the prompt marches of Joab overtook and hemmed him in by a close siege of the place. 15. **Abel of Beth-Maachah**—A verdant place—the addition of "Maachah" betokening that it belonged to the district Maachah, which lay far up the Jordan, at the foot of Lebanon.

16-22. **A WISE WOMAN SAVES THE CITY BY SHEBA'S HEAD. 16. Then cried a wise woman**—The appeal of this woman, who

like Deborah, was probably a judge or governess of the place, was a strong one. 18. **They were wont to speak in old time**—The translation on the margin gives a better meaning, which is to this effect: When the people saw thee lay siege to Abel, they said, Surely he will ask, if we will have peace, for the law (Deuteronomy, 20. 10) prescribes that he should offer peace to strangers, much more than to Israelitish cities; and, if he do this, we shall soon bring this to an amicable agreement, for we are a peaceable people. The answer of Joab brings out the character of that ruthless veteran as a patriot at heart, who, on securing the author of this insurrection, was ready to put a stop to further bloodshed, and release the peaceable inhabitants from all molestation.

23-26. **DAVID'S GREAT OFFICERS.** 23. **Now Joab was over all the host of Israel**—David, whatever his private wishes, found that he possessed not the power of removing Joab; so, winking at the murder of Amasa, he re-established that officer in his former post of commander-in-chief. The enumeration of David's cabinet is here given to show that the government was re-established in its wonted course.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1-9. **THE THREE YEARS' FAMINE FOR THE GIBEONITES CEASE BY HANGING SEVEN OF SAUL'S SONS.** 1. **The Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites**—The sacred history has not recorded either the time or the reason of this massacre. Some think that they were sufferers in the atrocity perpetrated by Saul at Nob (1 Samuel, 22. 19), where many of them may have resided as attendants of the priests; while others suppose it more probable that the attempt was made afterward, with a view to regain the popularity he had lost throughout the nation by that execrable outrage. 2. **in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah**—Under pretense of a rigorous and faithful execution of the divine law regarding the extermination of the Canaanites, he set himself to expel or destroy those whom Joshua had been deceived into sparing. His real object seems to have been, that the possessions of the Gibeonites, being forfeited to the crown, might be divided among his own people (1 Samuel, 22. 7). At all events, his proceedings against this people was in violation of a solemn oath, and involving *national* guilt; the famine was, in the wise and just distribution of Providence, made a *national* punishment, since the Hebrews either assisted in the massacre, or did not interpose to prevent it; since they neither endeavoured to repair the wrong, nor expressed any horror of it, and since a general protracted chastisement might have been indispensable to inspire a proper respect and protection to the Gibeonite remnant that survived. 6. **let seven of his sons be delivered unto us, and We will hang them up unto the Lord**—The practice of the Hebrews, as of most Oriental nations, was to slay first, and afterward to suspend on a gibbet the body, being not left hanging after sunset. The king could not refuse this demand of the Gibeonites; who, in

making it, were only exercising their right as blood-avengers; and, although through fear and a sense of weakness they had not hitherto claimed satisfaction, yet now that David had been apprised by the oracle of the cause of the long prevailing calamity, he felt it his duty to give the Gibeonites full satisfaction—hence their specifying the number seven—which was reckoned full and complete. And if it should seem unjust to make the descendants suffer for a crime which, in all probability, originated with Saul himself, yet his sons and grandsons might be the instruments of his cruelty, the willing and zealous executioners of this bloody *raid*. 6. **the king said, I will give them**—David cannot be charged as doing this as an indirect way of ridding himself of rival competitors for the throne, for those delivered up were only collateral branches of Saul's family, and never set up any claim to the sovereignty. Moreover, David was only granting the request of the Gibeonites as God had bidden him do. 8. **the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul whom she brought up for Adriel**—Merab, Michal's sister, was the wife of Adriel; but Michal adopted and brought up the boys under her care. 9. **they hanged them in the hill before the Lord**—Deeming themselves not bound by the criminal law of Israel (Deuteronomy, 21, 22, 23), their intention was to let the bodies hang until God, propitiated by this offering, should send rain upon the land, for the want of it had occasioned the famine. It was a heathen practice to gibbet men with a view of appeasing the anger of the gods in seasons of famine, and the Gibeonites, who were a remnant of the Amorites (*v.* 2), though brought to the knowledge of the true God, were not, it seems, free from this superstition. God, in His providence, suffered the Gibeonites to ask and inflict so barbarous a retaliation, in order that the oppressed Gibeonites might obtain justice and some reparation of their wrongs, especially that the scandal brought on the name of the true religion, by the violation of a solemn national compact, might be wiped away from Israel, and that a memorable lesson should be given to respect treaties and oaths.

10, 11. **RIZPAH'S KINDNESS UNTO THE DEAD.** 10. **Rizpah ... took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock**—She erected a tent near the spot, in which herself and her servants kept watch, as the relatives of executed persons were wont to do, day and night, to scare the birds and beasts of prey away from the remains exposed on the lowstanding gibbets.

12-22. **DAVID BURIES THE BONES OF SAUL AND JONATHAN IN THEIR FATHER'S SEPULCHRE.** 12. **David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, &c.**—Ere long, the descent of copious showers, or, perhaps, an order of the king, gave Rizpah the satisfaction of releasing the corpses from their ignominious exposure; and, incited by her pious example, David ordered the remains of Saul and his sons to be transferred from their obscure grave in Jabesh-gilead to an honourable interment in the family vault at Zelah or Zelzah (1 Samuel, 10, 2), now Beit-jala. 15-22. **Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel**—Although the Philistines had completely succumbed to



the army of David, yet the appearance of any gigantic champions among them revived their courage, and stirred them up to renewed inroads on the Hebrew territory. Four successive contests they provoked during the latter period of David's reign, in the first of which the king ran so imminent a risk of his life that he was no longer allowed to encounter the perils of the battle-field.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-51. DAVID'S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S POWERFUL DELIVERANCE AND MANIFOLD BLESSINGS.** The song contained in this chapter is the same as the eighteenth Psalm, where the full commentary will be given. It may be sufficient simply to remark that Jewish writers have noticed a great number of very minute variations in the language of the song as recorded here, from that embodied in the Book of Psalms—which may be accounted for by the fact that this, the first copy of the poem, was carefully revised and altered by David afterward, when it was set to the music of the tabernacle. This inspired ode was manifestly the effusion of a mind glowing with the highest fervour of piety and gratitude, and it is full of the noblest imagery that is to be found within the range even of sacred poetry. It is David's grand tribute of thanksgiving for deliverance from his numerous and powerful enemies, and establishing him in the power and glory of the kingdom.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**1-7. DAVID PROFESSES HIS FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES. 1. Now these be the last words of David**—Various opinions are entertained as to the precise meaning of this statement, which, it is obvious, proceeded from the compiler or collector of the sacred canon. Some think that, as there is no division of chapters in the Hebrew Scriptures, this introduction was intended to show that what follows is no part of the preceding song. Others regard this as the last of the king's poetical compositions; while a third party consider it the last of his utterances as an inspired writer. **raised up on high**—From an obscure family and condition to a throne. **the anointed of the God of Jacob**—Chosen to be king by the special appointment of that God, to whom, by virtue of an ancient covenant, the people of Israel owed all their peculiar destiny and distinguished privileges. **the sweet psalmist of Israel**—*i. e.*, delightful, highly esteemed. **2. The spirit of the Lord spake by me**—Nothing can more clearly show that all that is excellent in spirit, beautiful in language, or grand in prophetic imagery, which the Psalms of David contain, were owing, not to his superiority in natural talents or acquired knowledge, but to the suggestion and dictates of God's spirit. **3. The Rock of Israel**—This metaphor, which is commonly applied by the sacred writers to the

Almighty, was very expressive to the minds of the Hebrew people. Their national fortresses, in which they sought security in war, were built on high and inaccessible rocks. **spake to me**— Either perceptively, giving the following counsels respecting the character of an upright ruler in Israel, or prophetically, concerning David and his royal dynasty, and the great Messiah, of whom many think this is a prophecy, rendering the words, “he that ruleth,”—“there shall be a ruler over men.” 4. **As the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain**— Little patches of grass are seen rapidly springing up in Palestine after rain; and even where the ground has been long parched and bare, within a few days or hours after the enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth is so renewed, as that it is covered over with a pure fresh mantle of green. 5. **Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure**—“The light of the morning;” *i. e.*, the beginning of David’s kingdom was unlike the clear, brilliant dawn of an Eastern day, overcast by many black and threatening clouds; neither himself nor his family had been like the tender grass springing up from the ground, and flourishing by the united influences of the sun and rain; but rather like the grass that withereth, and is prematurely cut down. The meaning is, that, although David’s house had not flourished in an uninterrupted course of worldly prosperity and greatness, according to his hopes; although great crimes and calamities had beclouded his family history; some of the most promising branches of the royal tree had been cut down in his life-time; and many of his successors should suffer in like manner for their personal sins; although many reverses and revolutions may overtake his race and his kingdom, yet it was to him a subject of the highest joy and thankfulness that God will inviolably maintain His covenant with my family, until the advent of his greatest Son, the Messiah, who was the special object of his desire, and the author of his salvation. 6. **But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns**—*i. e.*, the wicked enemies and persecutors of this kingdom of righteousness. They resemble those prickly, thorny plants which are twisted together, whose spires point in every direction, and are so sharp and strong that they cannot be touched or approached without danger; but hard instruments and violent means must be taken to destroy or uproot them. So God will remove or destroy all who are opposed to this kingdom.

8-39. A CATALOGUE OF HIS MIGHTY MEN. 8. **These be the names of the mighty men whom David had**—This verse should be translated thus: He who sits in the seat of the Tachmonite (*i. e.*, of Jashobeam the Hachmonite), who was chief among the captains, the same is Adino the Eznite; he lifted up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time. The text is corrupt in this passage, the number eight hundred should be three hundred. [DAVIDSON’S HERM.] Under Joab he was chief or president of the council of war. The first or highest order was composed of him and his two colleagues, Eleazar and Shammah. Eleazar seems to have been left to fight the Philistines alone; and

on his achieving the victory, they returned to the spoil. In like manner Shammah was left to stand alone in his glory, when the Lord, by him, wrought a great victory. It is not very easy to determine whether the exploits that is afterward described were performed by the first or the second three. 15. **the well of Bethlehem**—An ancient cistern, with four or five holes in the solid rock, at about ten minutes' distance to the north of the eastern corner of the hill of Bethlehem, is pointed out by the natives as Bir-Daoud; that is, David's well. Dr. ROBINSON doubts the identity of the well, but others think that there are no good grounds for doing so. Certainly, considering this to be the ancient well, Bethlehem must have once extended ten minutes further to the north, and must have lain in times of old, not as now, on the summit, but on the northern rise of the hill; for the well is *by* or (1 Chronicles, 11. 7) *at* the gate. I find in the description of travelers, that the common opinion is, that David's captains had come from the south-east, in order to obtain, at the risk of their lives, the so-much longed-for water, while it is supposed that David himself was then in the great cave that is not far to the south-east of Bethlehem, which cave is generally held to have been that of Adullam. But (Joshua, 15-35) Adullam lay "in the valley:" that is, in the undulating plain at the western base of the mountains of Judea, and consequently to the south-west of Bethlehem. Be this as it may, David's *men* had, in any case, to break through the host of the Philistines, in order to reach the well; and the position of Bir-Daoud agrees well with this. [VAN DE VELDE.] 19. **the first three**—The mighty men or champions in David's military staff were divided into three classes. The highest, Jashobeam, Eleazar and Shammah; the second class, Abishai, Benaiah and Asahel; and the third class, the thirty of which Asahel was the chief. There are thirty-one mentioned in the list, including Asahel; and these added to the two superior orders make thirty-seven. Two of them, we know, were already dead, viz.: Asahel and Uriah; and if the dead, at the drawing up of the list, amounted to seven, then we might suppose a legion of honour, consisting of the definite number thirty, and where the vacancies, when they occurred, were replaced by fresh appointments.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1-9 DAVID NUMBERS THE PEOPLE. 1. **again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah**—"Again" carries us back to the former tokens of His wrath in the three years' famine. God, though He cannot tempt any man (James, 1. 13), is frequently described in Scripture as doing what He merely permits to be done; and so, in this case, He permitted Satan to tempt David. Satan was the active mover, while God only withdrew His supporting grace, and the great tempter prevailed against the king (see Exodus, 7. 13; 1 Samuel, 26. 19; ch. 16. 10; Psalm, 105. 25; Isaiah, 7. 17, &c.). The order was given to Joab, who, though not **gen-**

erally restrained by religious scruples, did not fail to represent, in strong terms (see 1 Chronicles, 21. 3), the sin and danger of this measure, and used every argument to dissuade the king from his purpose. The sacred history has not mentioned the objections which he and other distinguished officers urged against it in the council of David. But it expressly states that they were all overruled by the inflexible resolution of the king. 5. **they passed over Jordan**—This census was taken first in the Eastern parts of the Hebrew kingdom; and it would seem that Joab was accompanied by a military force, either to aid in this troublesome work, or to overawe the people who might display reluctance or opposition. **the river of Gad**—"Wady" would be a better term. It extends over a course estimated at about sixty miles, which though in summer almost constantly dry, exhibits very evident traces of being swept over by an impetuous torrent in winter (see Deuteronomy, 2. 36). 6. **the land of Tahtim-hodshi**—*i. e.*, the land lately acquired; viz., that of the Hagarenes conquered by Saul (1 Chronicles, 5. 10). The progress was northward. Thence they crossed the country, and, proceeding along the western coast to the southern extremities of the country, they at length arrived in Jerusalem, having completed the enumeration of the whole kingdom in the space of nine months and twenty days. 9. **Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king**—The amount here stated, compared with 1 Chronicles, 21. 5, gives a difference of 300,000. The discrepancy is only apparent, and admits of an easy reconciliation; thus (see 1 Chronicles, 27) there were twelve divisions of generals, who commanded monthly, and whose duty was to keep guard on the royal person, each having a body of troops consisting of 24,000 men, which, together, formed an army of 288,000; and as a separate detachment of 12,000 was attendant on the twelve princes of the twelve tribes mentioned in the same chapter, so both are equal to 300,000. These were not reckoned in this book, because they were in the actual service of the king as a regular militia. But 1 Chronicles, 21. 5, joins them to the rest, saying, "all those of Israel were one million, one hundred thousand;" whereas the author of Samuel, who reckons only the eight hundred thousand, does not say, "all those of Israel," but barely "and Israel were," &c. It must also be observed that, exclusive of the troops before mentioned, there was an army of observation on the frontiers of the Philistines' country, composed of 30,000 men, as appears by ch. 6. 1; which, it seems, were included in the number of 500,000 of the people of Judah by the author of Samuel; but the author of Chronicles, who mentions only 470,000, gives the number of that tribe exclusive of those thirty thousand men, because they were not all of the tribe of Judah, and therefore does not say, "all those of Judah," as he had said, "all those of Israel," but only, "and those of Judah." Thus both accounts may be reconciled. [DAVIDSON.]

**10-14. HE, HAVING THREE PLAGUES PROPOUNDED BY GAD, REPENTS, AND CHOOSES THREE DAYS' PESTILENCE. 10. David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned**—The act of numbering

the people was not in itself sinful; for Moses did it by the express authority of God. But David acted not only independently of such order or sanction, but from motives unworthy of the delegated king of Israel; from pride and vain-glory, from self-confidence and distrust of God, and, above all, from ambitious designs of conquest, in furtherance of which he was determined to force the people into military service, and to ascertain whether he could muster an army sufficient for the magnitude of the enterprises he contemplated. It was a breach of the constitution, an infringement of the liberties of the people, and opposed to that Divine policy which required that Israel should continue a separate people. His eyes were not opened to the heinousness of his sin till God had spoken unto him by his commissioned prophet. 13. **Shall seven years of famine come unto thee**—*i. e.*, in addition to the three that had been already, with the current year included (see 1 Chronicles, 21. 11, 12). 14. **David said... Let us fall into the hand of the Lord**—His overwhelming sense of his sin led him to acquiesce in the punishment denounced, notwithstanding its apparent excess of severity. He proceeded on a good principle in choosing the pestilence. In pestilence he was equally exposed, as it was just and right he should be, to danger as his people, whereas, in war and famine, he possessed means of protection superior to them. Besides, he thereby showed his trust, founded on long experience, in the Divine goodness.

15-25. HIS INTERCESSION TO GOD; THE PLAGUE CEASES. 15. **from the morning**—Rather *that* morning when Gad came, till the end of the three days. **there died of the people... seventy thousand men**—Thus was the pride of the vain-glorious monarch, confiding in the number of his population, deeply humbled. 16. **the Lord repented him of the evil**—God is often described in Scripture as repenting when He ceased to pursue a course He had begun. 17. **David said, (or had said) I have sinned... but these sheep, what have they done?**—The guilt of numbering the people lay exclusively with David. But in the body politic as well as natural, when the head suffers, all the members suffer along with it; and, besides, although David's sin was the immediate cause, the great increase of national offenses at this time had (*v.* 1) kindled the anger of the Lord. 18. **Araunah**—Or Ornan (1 Chronicles, 21. 18). **the Jebusite**—One of the ancient inhabitants, who, having become a convert to the true religion, retained his house and possessions. He resided on Mount Moriah, the spot on which the temple was afterward built (2 Chronicles, 3. 1), but that mount was not then inclosed in the town. 21. **to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed**—It is evident that the plague was not stayed till after the altar was built, and the sacrifice offered so that what is related (*v.* 16) was by anticipation. Previous to the offering of this sacrifice, he had seen the destroying angel as well as offered the intercessory prayer (*v.* 17). This was the sacrifice of expiation; and the reason why he was allowed to offer it on Mount Moriah was partly in gracious consideration to his fear of repairing to Gibeon (1 Chronicles, 21. 29, 30), and partly in anticipation of the removal of the

tabernacle and the erection of the temple there (2 Chronicles, 3. 1). 23. **All these things did Araunah, as a king, give**—Indicating, as the sense is, that this man had been anciently a heathen king or chief, but was now a proselyte who still retained great property and influence in Jerusalem, and whose piety was evinced by the liberality of his offers. The words, “as a king,” are taken by some to signify simply, “he gave with royal munificence.” 24. **Nay... I will... buy it of thee at a price**—The sum mentioned here, viz.: fifty shekels of silver, equal to £6 sterling, was paid for the floor, oxen and wood instruments only, whereas the large sum (1 Chronicles, 21. 25) was paid afterward for the whole hill, on which David made preparations for building the temple. 25. **David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings**—There seems to have been two sacrifices; the first expiatory, the second a thanksgiving for the cessation of the pestilence (see 1 Chronicles, 21. 26).

**ABSOLOM'S TOMB.**

# THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

COMMONLY CALLED

## THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS.

### CHAPTER I.

**1-4. ABISHAG CHERISHES DAVID IN HIS EXTREME AGE. 1. Now King David was old**—He was in the seventieth year of his age (2 Samuel, 5. 4, 5). But the wear and tear of a military life, bodily fatigue and mental care, had prematurely, if we may say it, exhausted the energies of David's strong constitution (1 Samuel, 16. 12). In modern Palestine and Egypt, the people, owing to the heat of the climate, sleep each in a *separate* bed. They only depart from this practice for medical reasons (Ecclesiastes, 4. 11). The expedient recommended by David's physicians is the regimen prescribed in similar cases still in the East, particularly among the Arab population, not simply to give heat, but "to cherish," as they are aware that the inhalation of young breath will give new life and vigour to the worn-out frame. The fact of the health of the young and healthier person being, as it were, stolen to support that of the more aged and sickly, is well established among the medical faculty; and hence the prescription for the aged king was made in a hygeian point of view, for the prolongation of his valuable life, and not merely for the comfort to be derived from the natural warmth imparted to his withered frame (TENT and KHAN). The polygamy of the age and country may account for the introduction of this practice; and it is evident that Abishag was made a concubine or secondary wife to David (see ch. 2. 22). **3. a Shunamite**—Shunem, in the tribe of Issachar (Joshua, 19. 18), lay on an eminence in the plain of Esdraelon, five miles south of Tabor. It is now called Sulam.

**5-31. ADONIJAH USURPS THE KINGDOM. 5. Then Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself**—Nothing is said as to the origin or rank of Haggith, so that it is probable she was not distinguished by family descent. Adonijah, though David's fourth son (2 Samuel, 3. 4; 1 Chronicles, 3. 2), was now the eldest alive; and his personal attractions and manners (1 Samuel, 9. 2), not only recommended him to the leading men about court, but made him the favourite of his father, who, though seeing him assume an equipage, becoming only the heir-presumptive to the throne (2 Samuel, 15. 1), said nothing; and his silence was considered by many, as well as by Adonijah, to be equivalent to an expression of consent. The sinking health of the king prompted him to take a decisive step in furtherance of his ambitious designs. **7. he conferred with Joab**—The anxiety of Adonijah to secure the influence of a leader so bold, enterprising and popular with the army was natural, and the accession of the hoary commander is easily accounted for from his recent grudge at the king (see 1 Samuel, 19. 13). **and with Abiathar the**

**priest** — His influence was as great over the priests and Levites, a powerful body in the kingdom, as that of Joab over the troops. It might be that both of them thought the crown belonged to Adonijah by right of primogeniture, from his mature age, and the general expectations of the people (ch. 2. 15). 8. **But Zadok the priest** — He had been high-priest in the tabernacle at Gibeon under Saul (1 Chronicles, 16. 39). David, on his accession, had conjoined him and Abiathar equal in the exercise of their high functions (2 Samuel, 8. 17; 15. 24; 29. 35). But it is extremely probable that some cause of jealousy or discord between them had arisen, and hence each lent his countenance and support to opposite parties. **Benaiah** — Distinguished for his bravery (1 Samuel, 23. 20); he had been appointed captain of the king's body-guard (2 Samuel, 8. 18; 20. 23; 1 Chronicles, 18. 17), and was regarded by Joab as a rival. **Nathan the prophet** — Was held in high estimation by David, and stood on the most intimate relations with the royal family (2 Samuel, 12. 25). **Shimei** — Probably the person of this name who was afterward enrolled among Solomon's great officers (ch. 4. 18). **Rei** — Supposed to be the same as Ira (2 Samuel, 20. 26). **and the mighty men** — The select band of worthies.

9. **En-rogel** — Situated (Joshua, 15. 7-10) east of Jerusalem, in a level place, just below the junction of the valley of Hinnom with that of Jehoshaphat. It is a very deep well, measuring 125 feet in depth — the water is sweet but not very cold, and it is at times quite full to overflowing. The Orientals are fond of enjoying festive repasts in the open air, at places which command the advantage of shade, water and verdure; and those fetes champetres are not cold collations, but magnificent entertainments, the animals being killed and dressed on the spot. Adonijah's feast at En-rogel was one of this Oriental description, and it was on a large scale (2 Samuel, 3. 4, 5; 5. 14-16; 1 Chronicles, 14. 1-7). At the accession of a new king, there were sacrifices offered (1 Samuel, 11. 15). But, on such an occasion, it was no less customary to entertain the grandes of the kingdom, and even the populace in a public manner (1 Chronicles, 12. 23-40). There is the strongest probability that Adonijah's feast was purely political, to court popularity, and secure a party to support his claim to the crown.

11-27. **Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba . . . let me give thee counsel, &c.** — The revolt was defeated by this prophet, who knowing the Lord's will (2 Samuel, 7. 12; 1 Chronicles, 22. 9), felt himself bound, in accordance with his character and office, to take the lead in seeing it executed. Hitherto the succession of the Hebrew monarchy had not been settled. The Lord had reserved to himself the right of nomination (Deuteronomy, 17. 15), which was acted upon in the appointments both of Saul and David, and in the case of the latter, the rule was so far modified that his posterity were guaranteed the perpetual possession of the sovereignty (2 Samuel, 7. 12). This Divine purpose was known throughout the kingdom; but no intimation had been made as to whether the right of inheritance was to belong to the eldest son. Adonijah, in common with the people generally, expected that this natural arrangement should be followed in the Hebrew kingdom as in all



others. Nathan, who was aware of the old king's solemn promise to Solomon, and, moreover, that this promise was sanctioned by the Divine will, saw that no time was to be lost. Fearing the effects of too sudden excitement in the king's feeble state, he arranged that Bath-sheba should go first to inform him of what was being transacted without the walls, and that himself should follow to confirm her statement. The narrative here not only exhibits the vivid picture of a scene within the interior of a palace, but gives the impression that a great deal of Oriental state ceremonial had been established in the Hebrew court. 20. **the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne**—When the kings died without declaring their will, then their eldest son succeeded. But frequently they designated, long before their death, which of their sons should inherit the throne. The kings of Persia, as well as of other Eastern countries, have exercised the same right in modern and even recent times. 21. **I and my son . . . shall be counted offenders**—*i. e.*, slain, according to the barbarous usage of the East, toward all who are rivals to the throne. 28-31. **Then King David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba**—He renews to her the solemn pledge he had given, in terms, the solemnity and impressiveness of which show that the aged monarch had roused himself to the duty the emergency called for.

32-49. SOLOMON, BY DAVID'S APPOINTMENT, IS ANOINTED KING. 33. **cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule**—Directions were forthwith given for the immediate coronation of Solomon. A procession was to be formed by the "servants of their lord," *i. e.*, the king's body-guard. Mules were then used by all the princes (2 Samuel, 13. 29); but there was a state mule, of which all subjects were forbidden, under pain of death, to make use, without special permission; so that its being granted to Solomon was a public declaration in his favour as the future king (see Esther, 6. 8, 9). **bring him down to Gihon**—A pool or fountain on the west of Jerusalem (see 2 Chronicles, 32. 30), chosen as equally public for the counter proclamation. 34. **anoint him**—Done only in the case of a new dynasty or disputed succession (see 1 Samuel, 16. 13; 2 Samuel, 2. 4). 35. **then ye shall come after him; that he may come and sit upon my throne**—The public recognition of the successor to the throne, during the old king's life-time, is accordant with the customs of the East. 39. **an horn of oil out of the tabernacle**—It was the sacred oil (Exodus, 30. 22) with which the kings were anointed. 40. **all the people came up after him**—*i. e.*, from the valley to the citadel of Zion. 41. **Adonijah, and all the guests that were with him, heard it as they made an end of eating**—The loud shouts raised by the populace at the joyous proclamation at Gihon, and echoed by assembled thousands, from Zion to En-rogel, were easily heard at that distance by Adonijah and his confederates. The arrival of a trusty messenger, who gave a full detail of the coronation ceremony, spread dismay in their camp. The wicked and ambitious plot they had assembled to execute was dissipated, and every one of the conspirators consulted his safety by flight.

**50-53. ADONIJAH, FLEEING TO THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR, IS DISMISSED BY SOLOMON.** 50. **Adonijah went and caught hold on the horns of the altar**—Most probably the altar of burnt-offering which had been erected on Mount Zion, where Abiathar, one of his partisans, presided as high priest. The horns or projections at the four corners of the altar, to which the sacrifices were bound, and which were tipped with the blood of the victim, were symbols of grace and salvation to the sinner. Hence the altar was regarded as a sanctuary (Exodus, 21. 14), but not to murderers, rebels, or deliberate perpetrators. Adonijah, having acted in opposition to the will of the reigning prince, was guilty of rebellion, and stood self-condemned. Solomon spared his life on the express condition of his good behaviour—living in strict privacy, leading a quiet, peaceable life, and meddling not with the affairs neither of the court nor the kingdom. 53. **they brought him down**—From the ledge around the altar on which he was standing. **he bowed himself**—*i. e.*, did homage to Solomon as king.

## CHAPTER II.

**I-II. DAVID DIES.** 1. **David charged his son**—The charge recorded here was given on his death to Solomon, and is different from the farewell address delivered in public some time before (1 Chronicles, 28. 29). It is introduced with great solemnity. 2. **I go the way of all the earth**—A beautiful and impressive periphrasis for death. **be thou strong, and show thyself a man**—This counsel is similar to the apostolic direction (1 Corinthians, 16. 13), and refers to the fortitude or strength of mind that was required to discharge the onerous functions of king. 3. **Keep the charge of the Lord thy God**—*i. e.*, the Divine law in all its ceremonial as well as moral requirements. But particular reference was intended to its political institutions, as it was only by strictly maintaining the conduct that became the Hebrew monarch (Deuteronomy, 17. 16-20), that he should secure the blessing of peace and prosperity to his reign (see Deuteronomy, 4. 6; 29. 10-21). 4. **There shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel**—A reference to the promise made to David of the sovereignty being vested perpetually in his lineage (2 Samuel, 7. 11-16), which was confirmed to Solomon afterward (see ch. 9. 5), and repeated with reference to its spiritual meaning long after (Jeremiah, 33. 17). 5, 6. **Thou knowest what Joab did**—The insolent and imperious conduct of that general had not only been deeply offensive to the feelings (2 Samuel, 18. 5-15; 19. 5-7), but calculated to bring reproach on the character, to injure the prospects and endanger the throne of David. Passing over the injuries committed directly against himself, David dwelt with strong feelings on the base assassination of Abner and Amasa. **shed the blood of war in peace, &c.**—The obvious meaning is, that in peace he acted toward them as if they had been in a state of warfare; but perhaps these graphic expressions might be designed to impress Solomon's mind more strongly with a sense of the malice, treachery, and

cruelty by which those murders were characterized. 6. **do according to thy wisdom**—Joab's immense popularity with the army required that any proceedings instituted against him should be taken with great prudence and deliberation. 8. **thou hast with thee Shimei**—Though David promised him a pardon, which, being enforced by the presence of a thousand followers, could not have been well refused, he warned his son against Shimei as a turbulent and dangerous character. It must not be supposed that in these dying instructions David was evincing a fierce vindictive spirit. He is rather to be considered as acting in the character of a king and magistrate, in noticing crimes which he had not been in a condition to punish, and pointing out persons of whom Solomon would be under a necessity to rid himself as dangerous to the state. The grateful mention of Barzillai's kindness was, however, a personal feeling that does honour to the warmth of his heart; and his silence as to Mephibosheth, the son of his beloved Jonathan, would imply the previous death of that prince. 9. **for thou art a wise man**—Solomon had given early indications of wisdom before his miraculous endowment with the heavenly gift (see ch. 3. 11); and his own sagacity would dictate the course that should be followed in any new offense Shimei might commit. 10. **So David slept with his fathers**—About six months after the coronation of Solomon (Cf. 2 Samuel, 5. 5, with 1 Chronicles, 29. 27). The interval was spent in developing his ideas and plans for the future glory of the kingdom, and providing for the permanent worship of God (see 1 Chronicles, 22, et seq). **David was buried in the city of David**—Sepulchers were not allowed within the precincts of cities. Jerusalem, however, formed an exception; and yet, even there, the privilege was reserved chiefly for the royal family (Acts, 2. 29). Tradition says that the bones of David repose on Mount Zion, and the minaret of a small mosque points out the spot which tradition has fixed. His was a noble, a wondrous, and a humbling history. He was a good man, yet his life was deformed by various crimes of a very gross character. But there were many bright and noble traits in his character; he was an earnest lover of the Divine law—his reign was signalized by many important services that contributed to the glory of God and the exaltation of His kingdom; and his name, as the sweet Psalmist of Israel, will be held in honour to the latest age of the church.

**12-24. SOLOMON SUCCEEDS HIM.** 12. **Then sat Solomon on the throne of David his father**—His ascension to the royal dignity was made under the happiest auspices. Having been born after his father became monarch of the *whole* kingdom, his claim, according to the notions of Oriental people, was preferable to that of all, *even* his elder brothers. The Hebrew kingdom enjoyed internal prosperity; it was respected and renowned abroad, and Solomon well knew how to improve these advantages. 13-18. **Adonijah came to Bathsheba**—Her question to him betrays an apprehension which his recent conduct might well warrant; but his pious acknowledgment of the Divine will seemed apparently to indicate so entire an acquiescence in the settlement of the suc-

cession, that, in her womanly simplicity, she perceived not the deep cunning and evil design that was concealed under his request, and readily undertook to promote his wishes. 19, 20. **Bathsheba went unto King Solomon**—The filial reverence, and the particular act of respect which Solomon rendered, was quite in accordance with the sentiments and customs of the East. The right hand is the place of honour; and as it is expressly said to have been assigned to “the king’s mother,” it is necessary to remark, that when a husband dies, his widow acquires a higher dignity and power, as a mother over her son, than she ever possessed before. Besides, the dignity of “king’s mother” is a state office, to which certain revenues are attached. The holder has a separate palace or court, as well as possesses great influence in public affairs; and as the dignity is held for life, it sometimes happens, in consequence of deaths, that the person enjoying it may not be related to the reigning sovereign by natural maternity. Bathsheba had evidently been invested with this honourable office. 22. **why dost thou ask Abishag . . . ask for him the kingdom also**—(See 2 Samuel, 16. 11; also 12, 8). Solomon’s indignation was roused; he in a moment penetrated the artful scheme, and from his associating the names of Abiathar and Joab, he seems to have suspected or known that those deep schemers had been the prompters of Adonijah. 23-25. **God do so to me, and more also**—The common form of introducing a solemn oath. **if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life**—Whether there was a treasonable design concealed under this request or not, the act, according to Eastern notions, was criminal, and of dangerous consequence to the state. There is no ground of censure upon Solomon for cruelty or participation in this instance. He had pardoned Adonijah’s former conspiracy; but this new attempt was rebellion against the viceroy appointed by the Divine King, and called for condign punishment. The office of executioner was among the Hebrews, as in other ancient countries of the East, performed unceremoniously and privately—often without any previous warning—by the captain of the guard, or one of his officers (Matthew, 14. 10). 26, 27. **unto Abiathar the priest said the king**—This functionary, as the counselor or accomplice of Adonijah, had deserved to share his fate. But partly from regard to his priestly dignity and partly from his long association with the late king, Solomon pronounced on him the mitigated sentence of banishment to his country estate at Anathoth, and thereby, as God’s vice-gerent, deprived him of his office and its emoluments. The sacred writer notices the remarkable fulfillment. Abiathar’s degradation from the high priesthood (see ch. 4. 4); of the doom denounced against the house of Eli (1 Samuel, 2. 30).

**28-35. JOAB SLAIN.** 28. **Then tidings came to Joab**—The execution of these sentences respectively on Adonijah and Abiathar, prepared Joab for his fate. Death, due to his great crimes (Numbers, 35. 33), would long ago have been inflicted, had not his power and popularity with the army been too formidable for the old king. He now fled to the altar, which, though a recognized asylum, afforded no sanctuary to the rebel and murderer (Exodus,

21. 14). And, as he refused to leave it, he seems to have cherished some faint hope that a religious scruple would have been felt at the thought of violating the sanctity of the place by bloodshed. Benaiah, not liking to assume any responsibility, referred the matter to Solomon, who determined that the law should take its course (Deuteronomy, 19. 13). 33. **Their blood shall return upon the head of Joab, &c.**—A reference is here made to the curse publicly and solemnly pronounced by King David (2 Samuel, 3. 28, 29). 34. **Benaiah . . . went up, and fell upon him**—According to the terms of the statute (Exodus, 21. 14), and the practice, in similar cases (2 Kings, 11. 15), the criminal was to be dragged from the altar and slain elsewhere. But the truth is, that the sanctity of the altar was violated as much by the violence used in forcing the criminal from the place as in shedding his blood there; the express command of God authorized the former, and therefore by implications permitted the latter. **was buried in his own house**—Or family vault, at his property in the wilderness of Judah. His interment was included in the king's order, as enjoined in the Divine law (Deuteronomy, 21. 23).

36-46. SHIMEI PUT TO DEATH. 36. **the king sent and called for Shimei**—He was probably residing at Bahurim, his native place. But, as he was a suspicious character, Solomon condemned him henceforth to live in Jerusalem, on the penalty of death, for going without the gates. He submitted to this confinement for three years, when, violating his oath, he was arrested and put to death by Solomon for perjury, aggravated by his former crime of high treason against David. 46. **the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon**—Now, that by the death of Shimei, *all* the leaders of the rival factions had been cut off.

### CHAPTER III.

I. SOLOMON MARRIES PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. I. **Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh**—This was a royal title, equivalent to Sultan, and the personal name of this monarch is said to have been Vaphres. The formation, on equal terms, of this matrimonial alliance with the royal family of Egypt, shows the high consideration to which the Hebrew kingdom had now risen. Rosellini has given, from the Egyptian monuments, what is supposed to be a portrait of this princess. She was received in the land of her adoption with great eclat; for the Song of Songs, and the Forty-fifth Psalm are supposed to have been composed in honour of this occasion, although they may both have a higher typical reference to the introduction of the Gentiles into the church. **brought her into the city of David**—*i. e.*, Jerusalem. She was not admissible into the stronghold of Zion, the building where the ark was (Deuteronomy, 23. 7, 8). She seems to have been lodged at first in his mother's apartments (Song, 3. 4; 8. 2), as a suitable residence was not yet provided for her in the new palace (ch. 7. 8; 9. 24; 2 Chronicles, 8. 11). **building...the wall of Jerusalem**—Although David had begun (Psalm 51. 18), it was, according to Josephus, reserved for

Solomon to extend and complete the fortifications of the city. It has been questioned whether this marriage was in conformity with the law (see Exodus, 34. 16; Deuteronomy, 7. 3; Ezra, 10. 1-10; Nehemiah, 13. 26). But it is nowhere censured in Scripture, as are the connections Solomon formed with other foreigners (ch. II. 1-3); whence it may be inferred that he had stipulated for her abandonment of idolatry, and conforming to the Jewish religion (Psalm 45. 10, 11).

**2-5. HIGH PLACES BEING IN USE, HE SACRIFICES AT GIBEON.**  
**3. Solomon loved the Lord**— This declaration, illustrated by what follows, affords undoubted evidence of the young king's piety; nor is the word "only," which prefaces the statement, to be understood as introducing a qualifying circumstance that reflected any degree of censure upon him. The intention of the sacred historian is to describe the generally prevailing mode of worship before the temple was built. The "high places," were altars erected on natural or artificial eminences, probably from the idea that men were brought nearer the Deity. They had been used by the patriarchs, and had become so universal among the heathen that they were almost identified with idolatry. They were prohibited in the law (Leviticus, 17. 3, 4; Deuteronomy, 12. 13, 14; Jeremiah, 7. 31; Ezekiel, 6. 3, 4; Hosea, 10. 8). But, so long as the tabernacle was migratory, and the means for the national worship were merely provisional, the worship on those high places was tolerated, and hence, as accounting for their continuance, it is expressly stated (*v.* 2) that God had not yet chosen a permanent and exclusive place for his worship. **4. the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there**— The prominent distinction of this place arose from the old tabernacle and the brazen altar which Moses had made in the wilderness, being there (1 Chronicles, 16. 39; 21. 29; 2 Chronicles, 1. 3-6). The royal progress was of public importance. It was a season of national devotion. The king was accompanied by his principal nobility (2 Chronicles, 1, 2), and, as the occasion was most probably one of the great annual festivals which lasted seven days, the rank of the offerer, and the succession of daily oblations may help in part to account for the immense magnitude of the sacrifices. **5. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream**— It was probably at the close of this season, when his mind had been elevated into a high state of religious fervour by the protracted services. Solomon felt an intense desire, and he had offered an earnest petition, for the gift of wisdom. In sleep his thoughts ran upon the subject of his prayer, and he dreamed that God appeared to him and gave him the option of every thing in the world—that he asked wisdom, and that God granted his request. His dream was but an imaginary repetition of his former desire, but God's grant of it was real.

**6-15. HE CHOOSES WISDOM.** **6. Solomon said**— *i. e.*, Had dreamed that he said. **7. I am but a little child**— Not in age, for he had reached manhood (ch. 2. 9), and must have been at least twenty years old, but he was raw and inexperienced in matters of government. **10. The speech pleased the Lord**— It was Solo-

mon's waking prayers that God heard and requited, but the acceptance was signified in this vision. 15. **Behold, it was a dream**—The vivid impression, the indelible recollection he had of this dream, together with the new and increased energy communicated to his mind, and the flow of worldly prosperity that rushed upon him, gave him assurance that it came by Divine inspiration, and originated in the grace of God. The wisdom, however, that was asked and obtained, was not so much of the heart as the head—it was wisdom not for himself personally, but for his office, such as would qualify him for the administration of justice, the government of a kingdom, and for the attainment of general scientific knowledge.

16-28. HIS JUDGMENT BETWEEN TWO HARLOTS. 16. **Then came there two women**—Eastern monarchs, who generally administer justice in person, at least in all cases of difficulty, often appeal to the principles of human nature, when they are at a loss otherwise to find a clue to the truth, or see clearly their way through a mass of conflicting testimony. The modern history of the East abounds with anecdotes of judicial cases, in which the decision given was the result of an experiment similar to this of Solomon upon the natural feelings of the contending parties.

#### CHAPTER IV.

1-6. SOLOMON'S PRINCES. 1. **So King Solomon was king over all Israel**—This chapter contains a general description of the state and glory of the Hebrew kingdom during the more flourishing or later years of his reign, as is evident from two of them marrying Solomon's daughters. 2. **these were the princes**—Or chief officers. **Azariah the son of Zadok the priest**—Rather, the prince, as the *Hebrew* word frequently signifies (Genesis, 41. 45; Exodus, 2. 16; 2 Samuel, 8. 18); so that from the precedency given to this person in the list, he seems to have been prime minister, the highest in office next the king. 3. **Scribes**—*i. e.*, Secretaries of state. Under David, there had been only one. And the employment of three functionaries in this department indicates either improved regulations by the division of labour, or a great increase of business occasioned by the growing prosperity of the kingdom, or a more extensive correspondence with foreign countries. **recorder**—*i. e.*, Historiographer, or annalist—an officer of great importance in Oriental courts, and the duties of which consisted in chronicling the occurrences of every day. 4. **Benaiah was over the host**—Formerly captain of the guard; he had succeeded Joab as commander of the forces. **Zadok and Abiathar were the priests**—The first only discharged the sacred functions—the latter had been banished to his country seat, and retained nothing more than the name of high priest. 5. **over the officers**—*i. e.*, The provincial governors enumerated in *v.* 17-19. **the principal officer, and the king's friend**—Perhaps president of the privy council, and Solomon's confidential friend or favourite. This high functionary had probably been reared along with Solo-

mon. That he should heap those honours on the sons of Nathan was most natural, considering the close intimacy of the father with the late king, and the deep obligations under which Solomon personally lay to the prophet. 6. **Ahishar was over the household**—Steward or chamberlain of the palace. **Adoniram**—Or Adoram (2 Samuel, 20. 24; ch. 12. 18), or Hadoram (2 Chronicles, 10. 18). **was over the tribute**—Not the collection of money or goods, but the levy of compulsory labourers (Cf. ch. 5. 13, 14).

7-21. HIS TWELVE OFFICERS. 7. **Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel**—The royal revenues were raised according to the ancient, and still in many parts, existing usage of the East, not in money payments, but in the produce of the soil. There would be always a considerable difficulty in the collection and transmission of these tithes (1 Samuel, 8. 15), and, therefore, to facilitate the work, Solomon appointed twelve officers, who had each the charge of a tribe or particular district of country, from which, in monthly rotation, the supplies for the maintenance of the king's household were drawn, having first been deposited in "the store cities" which were erected for their reception (ch. 9. 19; 2 Chronicles, 8. 4, 6). 8. **The son of Hur**—Or, as the margin has it, *Benhur*, *Ben-dekar*. In the rural parts of Syria, and among the Arabs, it is still common to designate persons not by their own names, but as the sons of their fathers. 21. **Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river**—All the petty kingdoms between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean were tributary to him. Similar is the statement in *v.* 24. 24. **from Tiphseh**—*i. e.*, Thapsaeus, a large and flourishing town on the west bank of the Euphrates, the name of which was derived from a celebrated ford near it, the lowest on that river. **even to Azzah**—*i. e.*, Gaza, on the southwestern extremity, not far from the Mediterranean. 22. **Solomon's provision for one day**—Not for the king's table only, but for all connected with the court, including, beside the royal establishment, those of his royal consorts, his principal officers, his body guards, his foreign visitors, &c. The quantity of fine flour used is estimated at 240 bushels; that of meal or common flour at 480. The number of cattle required for consumption, besides poultry and several kinds of game, which were got in abundance on the mountains, did not exceed in proportion what is needed in other courts of the East. 25. **every man under his vine and . . . fig-tree**—This is a common and beautiful metaphor for peace and security (Micah, 4. 4; Zechariah, 3. 10), founded on the practice still common in modern Syria, of training these fruit trees up the walls and stairs of houses, so as to make a shady arbour, beneath which the people sit and recreate themselves. 26. **forty thousand stalls**—For the royal mews (see 2 Chronicles, 9. 25). 28 **barley . . . and straw**—Straw is not used for litter; but barley mixed with chopped straw is the usual fodder of horses. **Dromedaries**—The one-humped camel, distinguished for their great fleetness.

29-34. HIS WISDOM. 29. **God gave wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart**—*i. e.*, High powers of mind, great capacity for receiving as well as aptitude for communicating knowledge. 30. **Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom**



**of the children of the East**—*i. e.*, The Arabians, Chaldeans and Persians (Genesis, 25. 6). **all the wisdom of Egypt**—Egypt was renowned as the seat of learning and sciences, and the existing monuments which so clearly describe the ancient state of society and the arts, show the high cultivation of the Egyptian people. **31. wiser than all men**—*i. e.*, All his contemporaries either at home or abroad. **than Ethan**—Or Jeduthun, of the family of Merari (I Chronicles, 6. 44). **Heman**—(I Chronicles, 15. 17-19). The chief of the temple musicians, and the king's seers (I Chronicles, 25. 5); the other two are not known. **the sons of Mahol**—Either another name for Zerah (I Chronicles, 2. 6), or taking it as a common noun, signifying a dance, a chorus, "the sons of Mahol" signify persons eminently skilled in poetry and music. **32. He spake three thousand proverbs**—Embodying his moral sentiments and sage observations on human life and character. **a thousand and five songs**—Psalm 72; 127; 132; and the Song of Songs, are his. **33. He spake of trees, from the cedar... to the hyssop**—All plants, from the greatest to the least. The Spirit of God has seen fit to preserve comparatively few memorials of the fruits of his gigantic mind. The greater part of those here ascribed to him have long since fallen a prey to the ravages of time, or perished in the Babylonish captivity, probably because they were not inspired.

## CHAPTER V.

**1-6. HIRAM SENDS TO CONGRATULATE SOLOMON. I. Hiram sent his servants unto Solomon**—The grandson of David's contemporary. [KITTO.] The same Hiram. [WINER and others.] The friendly relations which the king of Tyre had cultivated with David are here seen renewed with his son and successor, by a message of condolence as well as of congratulation on his accession to the throne of Israel. The alliance between the two nations had been mutually beneficial by the encouragement of useful traffic. Israel being agricultural, furnished corn and oil, while the Tyrians, who were a commercial people, gave in exchange their Phœnician manufactures, as well as the produce of foreign lands. A special treaty was now entered into in furtherance of that undertaking, which was the great work of Solomon's splendid and peaceful reign. **6. command that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon**—Nowhere else could Solomon have procured materials for the wood-work of his contemplated building. The forests of Lebanon, adjoining the sea in Solomon's time, belonged to the Phœnicians, and the timber being a lucrative branch of their exports, immense numbers of workmen were constantly employed in the felling of trees as well as the transportation and preparation of the wood. Hiram stipulated to furnish Solomon with as large a quantity of cedars and cypresses as he might require; and it was a great additional obligation, that he engaged to render the important service of having it brought down, probably by the Dog river, to the sea-side, and conveyed along the coast in floats; *i. e.*

the logs being bound together, to the harbour of Joppa (2 Chronicles, 2. 16), whence they could easily find the means of transport to Jerusalem. **my servants shall be with thy servants**—The operations were to be on so extensive a scale that the Tyrians alone would be insufficient. A division of labour was necessary, and while the former would do the work that required skillful artisans, Solomon engaged to supply the labourers.

**7-12. FURNISHES TIMBER TO BUILD THE TEMPLE.** 7. **Blessed be the Lord**—This language is no decisive evidence that Hiram was a worshipper of the true God, as he might use it only in the polytheistic principle of acknowledging Jehovah as the God of the Hebrews (see Chronicles, 2. 12). 8. **Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things . . . and I will do**—The contract was drawn out formally in a written document (2 Chronicles, 2. 11), which, according to Josephus, was preserved both in the Jewish and Syrian records. 10. **fir trees**—Rather, the cypress. 11. **food to his household**—This was an annual supply for the palace, different from that mentioned in 2 Chronicles, 2. 10, which was for the workmen in the forests.

**13-18. SOLOMON'S WORKMEN AND LABOURERS.** 13. **Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel**—The renewed notice of Solomon's Divine gift of wisdom (*v.* 12) is evidently introduced, to prepare, for this record of the strong but prudent measures he took toward the accomplishment of his work. So great a stretch of arbitrary power as is implied in this compulsory levy must have raised great discontent, if not opposition, had not his wise arrangement of letting the labourers remain at home two months out of three, added to the sacredness of the work, reconciled the people to this forced labour. The carriage of burdens, and the irksome work of excavating the quarries was assigned to the remnant of the Canaanites (ch. 9. 20 ; 2 Chronicles, 8. 7-9) and war prisoners made by David—amounting to 153,600. The employment of persons of that condition in Eastern countries for carrying on any public work, would make this part of the arrangements the less thought of. 17. **brought great stones**—The stone of Lebanon is "hard, calcareous, whitish and sonorous, like free-stone." [SHAW.] The same white and beautiful stone is to be got in every part of Syria and Palestine. **hewed stones**—Or neatly polished, as the *Hebrew* word signifies (Exodus, 20. 25). Both Jewish and Tyrian builders were employed in hewing these great stones. 18. **and the stone-squarers**—The margin, which renders it, "the Giblites" (Joshua, 13. 5) has long been considered a preferable translation. This marginal translation also must yield to another which has lately been proposed by a slight change in the *Hebrew* text, and which would be rendered thus: "Solomon's builders, and Hiram's builders, did hew them and bevel them." [THENIUS.] These great beveled or grooved stones, measuring, some twenty, others thirty feet in length, and from five to six feet in breadth, are still seen in the substructures about the ancient site of the temple ; and, in the judgment of the most competent observers, were those originally employed "to lay the foundation of the house."

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-4. THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.** 2. **the house which King Solomon built for the Lord**—The dimensions are given in cubits, which are to be reckoned according to the early standard (2 Chronicles, 3. 3), or holy cubit (Ezekiel, 40. 5 ; 43. 13), a hand-breadth longer than the common or later one. It is probable that the internal elevation only is here stated. 3. **the porch**—Or portico, extended across the whole front (see 2 Chronicles, 3. 4). **windows of narrow lights**—*i. e.*, Windows with lattices, capable of being shut and opened at pleasure, partly to let out the vapour of the lamps, the smoke of the frankincense, and partly to give light [KEIL.]

**5-10. THE CHAMBERS THEREOF.** 5. **against the wall of the house he built chambers**—On three sides, there were chambers in three stories, each story wider than the one beneath it, as the walls were narrowed or made thinner as they ascended, by a rebate being made, on which the beams of the side floor rested, without penetrating the wall. These chambers were approached from the right hand side, in the interior of the under story, by a winding staircase of stone, which led to the middle and upper stories. 7. **there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building**—A subterranean quarry has been very recently discovered near Jerusalem, where the temple stones are supposed to have been hewn. There is unequivocal evidence to be found in this quarry that the stones were dressed there, for there are blocks exactly similar in size, as well as in the nature of the stone, to the ancient remains. Thence, probably they would be moved on rollers down the Tyropean valley to the very side of the Temple. [TENT and KHAN.] 9, 10. **built the house**—The temple is here distinguished from the wings or chambers attached to it—and its roofing was of cedar-wood. 10. **chambers... five cubits high**—That was the height of the whole three stories. **they rested on the house with timber of cedar**—*i. e.*, Because the beams of the side-stones rested on the ledges of the temple wall ; the wing was attached to the house, it was connected with the temple ; without, however, interfering injuriously with the sanctuary. [KEIL.]

**11-14. GOD'S PROMISES UNTO IT.** 11. **the word of the Lord came to Solomon**—Probably by a prophet. It was very seasonable, being designed first to encourage him to go on with the building by confirming anew the promise made to his father David (2 Samuel, 7) ; and, secondly, to warn him against the pride and presumption of supposing that, after the erection of so magnificent a temple, he and his people would always be sure of the presence and favour of God. The condition on which that blessing could alone be expected was expressly stated. The dwelling of God among the children of Israel refers to those symbols of His presence in the temple, which were the visible tokens of His spiritual relation to that people.

**15-22. THE CEILING AND ADORNING OF IT.** 15. **he built the walls of the house within**—The walls were wainscoted with cedar wood—the floor paved with cypress planks—the interior was divided by a partition consisting of folding doors, which were opened and shut with golden chains, into two apartments—the back or inner room, *i. e.*, the most holy place, was twenty cubits long and broad—the front, or outer room, *i. e.*, the *holy* place, was forty cubits. The cedar wood was beautifully embellished with figures in relievo, representing clusters of foliage, and open flowers, cherubims and palm-trees; and the whole interior was overlaid with gold, so that neither wood nor stone was seen; nothing met the eye but pure gold, either plain or richly chased. 31-35. **for the entering of the oracle**—The door of the most holy place was made of solid olive-tree and adorned with figures—that of the holy place was made of cypress wood, the sides being of olive-wood. 36. **the inner court**—Was for the priests, and its wall, which had a coping of cedar, is said to have been so low that the people could see over it.

**37, 38. THE TIME TAKEN TO BUILD IT.** 37. **In the fourth year was the foundation laid**—The building was begun in the second month of the fourth year, and completed in the eighth month of the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, comprising a period of seven and a half years, which is reckoned here in round numbers. It was not a very large, but a very splendid building, requiring great care, and ingenuity, and division of labour. The immense number of workmen employed, together with the previous preparation of the materials, serves to account for the short time occupied in the process of building.

## CHAPTER VII.

**I. BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S HOUSE.** 1. **Solomon was building his own house thirteen years**—The time occupied in building his palace was nearly double that spent in the erection of the temple, because neither had there been the same previous preparations for it, nor was there the same urgency as in providing a place of worship, on which the national well-being so much depended.

**2-7. OF THE HOUSE OF LEBANON.** 2. **He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon**—It is scarcely possible to determine whether this was a different edifice from the former, or whether his house, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and the one for Pharaoh's daughter, were not parts of one grand palace. As difficult is it to decide what was the origin of the name; some supposing it was so called because built on Lebanon; others, that it was in or near Jerusalem, but contained such a profuse supply of cedar columns, as to have occasioned this peculiar designation. We have a similar peculiarity of name in the building called the East India House, though situated in London. The description is conformable to the arrangement of Eastern palaces. The building stood in the middle of a great oblong square, which was surrounded by an inclosing wall, against which the houses and offices of those

attached to the court were built. The building itself was oblong, consisting of two square courts, flanking a large oblong hall which formed the center, and which being 100 cubits long, by 50 broad, was properly the house of the forest of Lebanon, being the part where were the cedar pillars of this hall. In front was the porch of judgment, which was appropriated to the transaction of public business. On the one side of this great hall was the king's house; and on the other the harem or royal apartments for Pharaoh's daughter (Esther, 2. 3, 9). This arrangement of the palace accords with the Oriental style of building, according to which a great mansion always consists of three divisions, or separate houses—all connected by doors and passages—the men dwelling at one extremity, the female portion of the family at the other, while public rooms occupy the central part of the building. **10. the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones**—Enormous stones, corresponding exactly with the dimensions given, are found in Jerusalem at this day. Not only the walls from the foundation to the roof-beams were built of large hewn stones, but the spacious court also around the palace was paved with great square stones. **12. for the inner court of the house of the Lord**—Should be, as in the inner court of the house of the Lord; the meaning is, that in this palace, as in the temple, rows of hewed stones, and the cedar beams formed the inclosing wall.

**13-51. HIRAM'S WORKS. Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre**—The Tyrians and other inhabitants of the Phœnician coast were the most renowned artists and workers in metal in the ancient world. **14. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali**—In 2 Chronicles, 2. 14, his mother is said to have been of the daughters of Dan. The apparent discrepancy may be reconciled thus: Hiram's mother, though belonging to the tribe of Dan, had been married to a Naphtalite, so that, when married afterward to a Tyrian, she might be described as a widow of the tribe of Naphtali. Or, if she was a native of the city Dan (Laish), she might be said to be of the daughters of Dan, as born in that place; and of the tribe of Naphtali, as really belonging to it. **a worker in brass**—Referring particularly to the works described in this chapter; but in 2 Chronicles, 2. 13, his artistic skill is represented as extending to a great variety of departments; and, in fact, he was appointed, from his great natural talents and acquired skill, to superintend the execution of all the works of art in the temple. **15-22. two pillars of brass, eighteen cubits high**—They were made of the brass (bronze) which was taken from the king of Zobah (1 Chronicles, 18. 8). In 2 Chronicles, 3. 15, they are said to have been thirty-five cubits high. There, however, their joint lengths are given; whereas here the length of the pillars is given separately. Each pillar was seventeen and a half cubits long, which is stated in round numbers, as eight. Their dimensions in English measure are as follows: The pillars without the capitals measured thirty-two and a half feet long, and seven feet diameter; and if hollow, as WHISTON, in his translation of Josephus, thinks (Jeremiah, 52. 21), the metal would be about three and a half inches thick; so that the whole casting of one pillar must have

been from sixteen to twenty tons. The height of the capitals was eight and three-fourths feet; and, at the same thickness of metal, would not weigh less than seven or eight tons each. The nature of the workmanship in the finishing of these capitals is described (*v.* 17-22). The pillars, when set up, would stand forty feet in height. [NAPIER'S METAL.] 17. **Nets of checker-work** — *i. e.*, branch-work, resembling the branches of palm-trees, and *wreaths of chain-work*; *i. e.*, plaited in form of a chain, composing a sort of crown or garland. Seven of these were wound in festoons on one capital, and over and underneath them fringes, one hundred in a row; and two rows of pomegranates strung on chains (2 Chronicles, 3. 16) ran round the capital (*v.* 42; Cf. 2 Chronicles, 4. 12, 13; Jeremiah, 52. 23), which, itself, was of a bowl-like or globular form (*v.* 41). These rows were designed to form a binding to the ornamental work — to keep it from falling asunder; and they were so placed as to be above the chain-work, and below the place where the branch-work was. 19. **Lily-work** — Beautiful ornaments resembling the stalks, leaves and blossoms of lilies — of large dimensions, as suited to the height of their position. 23. **Jachin and Boaz** — These names were symbolical, and indicated the strength and stability — not so much of the material temple, for they were destroyed along with it (Jeremiah, 52. 17) — as of the spiritual kingdom of God, which was embodied in the temple. 23-26. **He made a molten sea** — In the tabernacle was no such vessel; the laver served the double purpose of washing the hands and feet of the priests as well as the parts of the sacrifices. But in the temple there were separate vessels provided for these offices (see 2 Chronicles, 4. 6). The molten sea was an immense semicircular vase, measuring seventeen and a half feet in diameter, and being eight and three-fourths feet in depth — this, at three and a half inches, could not weigh less than from twenty-five to thirty tons in one solid casting — and held from 16,000 to 20,000 gallons of water. The brim was all carved with lily work of flowers, and oxen were carved or cut on the outside all round, to the number of 300; and it stood on a pedestal of twelve oxen. These oxen must have been of considerable size, like the Assyrian bulls, so as their corresponding legs would give thickness or strength to support so great a weight; for, when the vessel was filled with water, the whole weight would be about 100 tons. [NAPIER.] (See 2 Chronicles, 4. 5). 27-39. **he made ten bases of brass** — These were trucks or four-wheeled carriages, for the support and conveyance of the lavers. The description of their structure shows that they were elegantly fitted up, and skillfully adapted to their purpose. They stood, not on the axles, but on four rests attached to the axles, so that the figured sides were considerably raised above the wheels. They were all exactly alike in form and size. The lavers which were borne upon them were vessels capable each of holding 300 gallons of water, upward of a ton weight. The whole, when full of water, would be no less than two tons. [NAPIER.] 40-45. **And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basins** — These verses contain a general enumeration of Hiram's works, as well those already mentioned, as other minor

things. The Tyrian artists are frequently mentioned by ancient authors as skillful artificers in fashioning and embossing metal cups and bowls; and we need not wonder, therefore, to find them employed by Solomon in making the golden and brazen utensils for his temple and palaces. 46. **In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them** — Zarthan or Zaretan (Joshua, 3. 16), or Zartanah (ch. 4. 12), or Zeredathah (2 Chronicles, 4. 17), was on the bank of the Jordan in the territories of Western Manasseh. Succoth was situated on the eastern side of Jordan, at the ford of the river near the mouth of the Jabbok. One reason assigned by commentators for the castings being made there is, that at such a distance from Jerusalem that city would not be annoyed by the smoke and noxious vapours necessarily occasioned by the process (Note in BAGSTER'S BIBLE). But the true reason is to be found in the nature of the soil; *Marg.*, the thickness of the ground. That part of the Jordan valley abounds with marl. Clay and sand are the moulding material still used for bronze. Such large quantities of metal, as one of these castings would contain, could not be fused in one furnace, but would require a series of furnaces, especially for such a casting as the Brazen Sea — the whole series of furnaces being filled with metal, and fused at one time, and all tapped together, and the metal let run into the mould. Thus a national foundry was erected in the plain of Jordan. [NAPIER.] 48. **the altar of gold** — *i. e.*, the altar of incense. 49. **candlesticks of pure gold** — Made, probably, according to the model of that in the tabernacle, which, along with the other articles of furniture, were deposited with due honour, as sacred relics, in the temple. But these seem not to have been used in the temple service; for Solomon made new lavers, tables, and candlesticks, ten of each. (See further regarding the dimensions and furniture of the temple, in 2 Chronicles, 3-5).

## CHAPTER VIII.

1-12. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE. 2. **at the feast in the month Ethanim** — The public and formal inauguration of this national place of worship did not take place till eleven months after the completion of the edifice. The delay, most probably, originated in Solomon's wish to choose the most fitting opportunity when there should be a general rendezvous of the people in Jerusalem (*v.* 2); and that was not till the next year. That was a jubilee year, and he resolved on commencing the solemn ceremonial a few days before the feast of Tabernacles, which was the most appropriate of all seasons, as that annual festival had been instituted in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths during their stay in the wilderness, as well as of the tabernacle, which was then erected, in which God promised to meet and dwell with His people, sanctifying it with His glory. As the tabernacle was to be superseded by the temple, there was admirable propriety in choosing the feast of the Tabernacles as the period for dedicating the new place of worship, and praying that the same

distinguished privileges might be continued to it in the manifestation of the Divine presence and glory. At the time appointed for the inauguration, the king issued orders for all the heads and representatives of the nation to repair to Jerusalem, and take part in the august procession. The lead was taken by the king and elders of the people, whose march must have been slow, as priests were stationed to offer an immense number of sacrifices at various points in the line of road through which the procession was to go; then came the priests bearing the ark and the tabernacle—the old Mosaic tabernacle which was brought from Gibeon. Lastly, the Levites followed, carrying the vessels and ornaments belonging to the old, for lodgment in the new, house of the Lord. There was a slight deviation in this procedure from the order of march established in the wilderness (Numbers, 3. 31; 4. 15); but the spirit of the arrangement was duly observed. The ark was deposited in the oracle, *i. e.*, the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim—not the Mosaic cherubim, which were firmly attached to the ark (Exodus, 37. 7, 8), but those made by Solomon, which were far larger and more expanded. 8. **they drew out the staves**—A little way, so as to project (see Exodus, 25. 15; Numbers, 4. 6), and they were left in that position. The object was, that these projecting staves might serve as a guide to the high priest, in conducting him to that place where, once a year, he went to officiate before the ark, otherwise he might miss his way in the dark, the ark being wholly overshadowed by the wings of the cherubim. 9. **There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone**—Nothing else was ever in the ark, the articles mentioned (Hebrews, 9. 4) being not *in*, but *by* it, being laid in the most holy place before the testimony (Exodus, 16. 33; Numbers, 17. 10). 10, 11. **the cloud filled the house of the Lord**—The cloud was the visible symbol of the Divine presence, and its occupation of the sanctuary was the testimony of God's gracious acceptance of the temple as of the tabernacle (Exodus, 40. 34). The dazzling brightness, or rather, perhaps, the dense portentous darkness, of the cloud, struck the minds of the priests, as it formerly had done Moses, with that astonishment and terror (Leviticus, 16. 2-13; Deuteronomy, 4. 24; Exodus, 40. 35), that they could not remain. Thus the temple became the place where the Divine glory was revealed, and the King of Israel established his royal residence.

12-21. SOLOMON'S BLESSING. 12. **Then spake Solomon**—For the re-assurance of the priests and the people, the king reminded them that the cloud, instead of being a sign ominous of evil, was a token of approval. **The Lord said**—Not in express terms, but by a continuous course of action (Exodus, 13. 21; 24. 16; Numbers, 9. 15). 13. **I have surely built thee an house**—This is an apostrophe to God, as perceiving His approach by the clouds, and welcoming Him to enter as guest or inhabitant of the fixed and permanent dwelling-place, which, at His command, had been prepared for His reception. 14. **The king turned his face about**—From the temple where he had been watching the movement of the mystic cloud, and while the people were standing, partly as the attitude of devotion, partly out of respect to royalty, the king



gave a fervent expression of praise to God for the fulfillment of His promise (2 Samuel, 7. 6-16).

**22-61. HIS PRAYER.** 22. **Solomon stood before the altar** — This position was in the court of the people, on a brazen scaffold erected for the occasion (2 Chronicles, 6. 13), fronting the altar of burnt-offering, and surrounded by a mighty concourse of people. Assuming the attitude of a suppliant, kneeling (*v.* 54; Cf. 2 Chronicles, 6. 24), and with uplifted hands, he performed the solemn act of consecration — an act remarkable among other circumstances for this, that it was done, not by the high priest or any member of the Aaronic family, but by the king in person, who might minister *about*, though not *in*, holy things. This sublime prayer, which breathes sentiments of the loftiest piety blended with the deepest humility, naturally bore a reference to the national blessing and curse contained in the law — and the burden of it — after an ascription of praise to the Lord for the bestowment of the former, was an earnest supplication for deliverance from the latter. He specifies seven cases in which the merciful interposition of God would be required; and he earnestly bespeaks on the condition of people praying toward that holy place. The blessing addressed to the people at the close is substantially a brief recapitulation of the preceding prayer.

**62-64. HIS SACRIFICE OF PEACE-OFFERING.** 62. **the king, and all Israel . . . offered sacrifice before the Lord** — This was a burnt-offering with its accompaniments, and being the first laid on the altar of the temple, was, as in the analogous case of the tabernacle, consumed by miraculous fire from heaven (see 2 Chronicles, 7. 12). On remarkable occasions, the heathens sacrificed hecatombs (a hundred), and even chiliombs (a thousand animals), but the public sacrifices offered by Solomon on this occasion surpassed all the other oblations on record, without taking into account those presented by private individuals, which, doubtless, amounted to a large additional number. The large proportion of the sacrifices were peace-offerings, which afforded the people an opportunity of festive enjoyment. 63. **So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord** — The dedication was not a ceremony ordained by the law, but it was done in accordance with the sentiments of reverence, naturally associated with edifices appropriated to Divine worship. 64. **The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court** — *i. e.*, the whole extent of the priests' court — the altar of burnt-offerings, though large (2 Chronicles, 4. 1), being totally inadequate for the vast number of sacrifices that distinguished this occasion. It was only a temporary erection to meet the demands of an extraordinary season, in aid of the established altar, and removed at the conclusion of the sacred festival.

**65. THE PEOPLE JOYFUL.** 65. **from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt** — *i. e.*, From one extremity of the kingdom to the other. The people flocked from all quarters. **seven days and seven days, even fourteen days** — The first seven were occupied with the dedication, and the other seven devoted to the feast of tabernacles (2 Chronicles, 7. 9). The particular form of

expression indicates that the fourteen days were not continuous, and that some interval occurred in consequence of the great day of atonement falling on the tenth of the seventh month (*v.* 2), and the last day of the feast of tabernacles was on the twenty-third (2 Chronicles, 7. 10), when the people returned to their homes, with feelings of the greatest joy and gratitude "for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people."

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-9. GOD'S COVENANT IN A SECOND VISION WITH SOLOMON.**

**1. And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house**—This first verse is connected with the eleventh, all that is contained between verses 2-10 being parenthetical. **2. That (rather for) the Lord had appeared**—This appearance was, like the former one at Gibeon, most probably made in a supernatural vision, and on the night immediately following the dedication of the temple (2 Chronicles, 7. 12). The strain of it corresponds to this view, for it consists of direct answers to his solemn inaugural prayer; *v.* 3, is an answer to ch. 8. 29; *v.* 4, 5, is an answer to ch. 8. 25, 26; *v.* 6-9, to ch. 8. 33-46; see also Deuteronomy, 29. 22-24. **8. This house which is high**—"High," either in point of situation, for it was built on a hill, and therefore conspicuous to every beholder; or "high" in respect to privilege, honour and renown; or this house "of the Most High" notwithstanding all its beauty and magnificence, shall be destroyed, and remain in such a state of ruin and degradation, as to be a striking monument of the just judgment of God. The record of this second vision, in which were rehearsed the conditions of God's covenant with Solomon, and the consequences of breaking them, is inserted here as a proper introduction to the narrative about to be given of this king's commercial enterprises and ambitious desire for worldly glory. For this king, by encouraging an influx of foreign people, and a taste for foreign luxuries, rapidly corrupted his own mind, and that of his subjects, that "they turned from following God, they and their children" (*v.* 6).

**10-23. THE MUTUAL PRESENTS OF SOLOMON AND HIRAM. 10. at the end of twenty years**—Seven and a half years were spent in building the temple, and twelve and a half or thirteen in the erection of his palace (ch. 7. 1; 2 Chronicles, 8. 1). This verse is only a recapitulation of the first, necessary to recover the thread of connection in the narrative. **11. Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee**—According to Josephus, they were situated on the north-west of it, adjacent to Tyre. Though lying within the boundaries of the promised land (Genesis, 15. 18; Joshua, 1. 4), they had never been conquered till then, and were inhabited by Canaanite heathens (Judges, 4. 2-13; 2 Kings, 15. 29). They were probably given to Hiram, whose dominions were small, as a remuneration for his important services in furnishing workmen, materials, and an immense quantity of *wrought* gold (*v.* 14) for the temple and other buildings. [MICHAELIS.] The gold, however,

as others think, may have been the amount of forfeits paid to Solomon by Hiram for not being able to answer the riddles and apothegms, with which, according to Josephus, in their private correspondence, the two sovereigns amused themselves. Hiram having refused these cities, probably on account of their inland situation making them unsuitable to his maritime and commercial people, Solomon satisfied his ally in some other way — and, taking these cities into his own hands, he first repaired their shattered walls, then filled them with a colony of Hebrews (2 Chronicles, 8. 2). 15-24. **this is the reason of the levy** — A levy refers both to men and money, and the necessity for Solomon making it arose from the many gigantic works he undertook to erect. **Millo** — Part of the fort of Jerusalem on Mount Zion (2 Samuel, 5. 9; 1 Chronicles, 11. 8), or a row of stone bastions around Mount Zion, Millo being the great corner tower of that fortified wall (ch. 11. 27; 2 Chronicles, 32. 5). **the wall of Jerusalem** — Either repairing some breaches in it (ch. 11. 27), or extending it, so as to inclose Mount Zion. **Hazor** — Fortified on account of its importance as a town in the northern boundary of the country. **Megiddo** — (now Lejjun) — Lying in the great caravan road between Egypt and Damascus, was the key to the north of Palestine by the western lowlands, and therefore fortified. **Gezer** — On the western confines of Ephraim; and, though a Levitical city, occupied by the Canaanites. Having fallen by right of conquest to the king of Egypt, who, for some cause, attacked it, it was given by him as a dowry to his daughter, and fortified by Solomon. 17. **Beth-horon the nether** — Situated on the way from Joppa to Jerusalem and Gibeon; it required, from so public a road, to be strongly garrisoned. 18. **Baalath** — Baalbek. **Tadmor** — Palmyra, between Damascus and the Euphrates, was rebuilt and fortified as a security against invasion from northern Asia. In accomplishing these and various other works which were carried on throughout the kingdom, especially in the north, where Rezon of Damascus, his enemy, might prove dangerous, he employed vast numbers of the Canaanites as galley slaves (2 Chronicles, 2. 18), treating them as prisoners of war, who were compelled to do the drudgery and hard labour, while the Israelites were only engaged in honourable employment. 23. **these were the chief of the officers** — (See 2 Chronicles, 8. 10).

24-28. **SOLOMON'S YEARLY SACRIFICES.** 24, 25. **three times in a year** — *viz.*, at the Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chronicles, 8. 13; 31. 3). The circumstances mentioned in these two verses form a proper conclusion to the record of his buildings, and show that his design, in erecting those at Jerusalem, was to remedy defects existing at the commencement of his reign (see ch. 3. 1-4). 26. **Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth** — These were neighbouring ports at the head of the Eastern or Elanitic branch of the Red Sea. Tyrian ship-carpenters and sailors were sent there for Solomon's vessels (see 2 Chronicles, 8.) **Ezion-geber** — *i. e.*, the giant's backbone; so called from a reef of rocks at the entrance of the harbour. **Eloth** — Elim or Elath; *i. e.*, "the trees" — a grove of terebinths still exists at the head of

the gulf. 28. **Ophir**—A general name, like the East or West Indies with us, for all the southern regions lying on the African, Arabian or Indian seas, so far as at that time known. [HEEREN.] **gold, four hundred and twenty talents**—See 2 Chronicles, 8. 18. At 125 lb. Troy, or 1,500 oz. to the talent, and £4 to the oz., this would make £2,604,000.

## CHAPTER X.

1-13. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA ADMIRES THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON. 1. **the queen of Sheba**—As to where her country was—some think it was the Sabean kingdom of Yemen, of which the capital was Saba, in Arabia Felix; others, that it was in African Ethiopia, *i. e.*, Abyssinia, toward the south of the Red Sea. The opinions preponderate in favour of the former. This view harmonizes with the language of our Lord, as Yemen means “South;” and this country extending to the shores of the Indian ocean, might, in ancient times, be considered “the uttermost parts of the earth.” **heard of the fame of Solomon**—Doubtless by the Ophir fleet. **concerning the name of the Lord**—Meaning either his great knowledge of God, or the extraordinary things which God had done for him. **hard questions**—Enigmas or riddles. The Orientals delight in this species of intellectual exercise, and test wisdom by the power and readiness to solve them. 2. **she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels**—A long train of those beasts of burden forms the common way of traveling in Arabia; and the presents specified consist of the native produce of that country. Of course, a royal equipage would be larger and more imposing than an ordinary caravan. 6. **It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts, and of thy wisdom**—The proofs she obtained of Solomon’s wisdom—not from his conversation only, but also his works; the splendour of his palace—the economy of his kitchen and table—the order of his court—the gradations and gorgeous costume of his servants—above all, the arched viaduct that led from his palace to the temple (2 Kings, 16. 18), and the remains of which have been recently discovered [ROBINSON], overwhelmed her with astonishment. 9. **Blessed be the Lord thy God**—See ch. 5. 7. It is quite possible, as Jewish writers say, that this queen was converted, through Solomon’s influence, to the worship of the true God. But there is no record of her making any gift or offering in the temple. 10. **she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold**—£720,000. 11. **almug tree**—Parenthetically, along with the valuable presents of the queen of Sheba, is mentioned a foreign wood, which was brought in the Ophir ships. It is thought by some to be the sandal wood; by others, to be the Deodar—a species of fragrant fir, much used in India for sacred and important works. Solomon used it for stairs in his temple and palace (2 Chronicles, 9. 11), but chiefly for musical instruments. 13. **King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides**—*i. e.*, Solomon not only gave his illustrious guest all the insight and

information she wanted, but, according to the Oriental fashion, gave her ample remuneration for the presents she had brought.

**14-29. HIS RICHES.** 14. **Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year**—666 talents, equal to £3,996,000. The sources whence this was derived are not mentioned; nor was it the full amount of his revenue; for this was, “besides that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice-merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.” The great encouragement he gave to commerce was the means of enriching his royal exchequer. By the fortifications which he erected in various parts of his kingdom, and particularly at such places as Thapsaeus, one of the passages of Euphrates, and at Tadmor, in the Syrian desert, he gave complete security to the caravan trade from the depredations of the Arab marauders; and it was reasonable that, in return for this protection, he should exact a certain toll or duty for the importation of foreign goods. A considerable revenue, too, would arise from the use of the store cities and Khans he built; and it is not improbable that those cities were emporia where the caravan merchants unloaded their bales of spices and other commodities, and sold them to the king’s factors, who, according to the modern practice in the East, retailed them in the Western markets at a profit. “The revenue derived from the tributary kings, and from the governors of the country,” must have consisted in the tribute which all inferior magistrates periodically bring to their sovereigns in the East, in the shape of presents of the produce of their respective provinces. 16, 17. **Two hundred targets, six hundred shekels**—These defensive arms were anciently made of wood and covered with leather; those were covered with fine gold. 600 shekels were used in the gilding of each target—300 for each shield. They were intended for the state armoury of the palace (see ch. 14. 26). 18-26. **A great throne of ivory**—It seems to have been made, not of solid ivory, but veneered. It was in the form of an arm-chair with a carved back. The ascent to it was by six steps, on each of which stood lions, in place of a railing—while a lion, probably of gilt metal, stood at each side, which, we may suppose from the analogy of other Oriental thrones, supported a canopy. A golden footstool is mentioned (2 Chronicles, 9. 18) as attached to this throne, whose magnificence is described as unrivaled. 22. **A navy of Tarshish**—Tartessus in Spain, where gold, and especially silver, was got, anciently, in so great abundance, that it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. But Tarshish came to be a general term for the West (Jonah, 1). **at sea**—On the Mediterranean. **once in three years**—*i. e.*, third year. Without the mariner’s compass they had to coast along the shore. The ivory, apes and peacocks might have been purchased, on the outward or homeward voyage, on the north coast of Africa, where those animals were to be found. They were particularized, probably as being the rarest articles on board. 26-29. (See 2 Chronicles, 1. 14-17.)

## CHAPTER XI.

**1-8. SOLOMON'S WIVES AND CONCUBINES IN HIS OLD AGE. 1. But King Solomon loved many strange women** — Solomon's extraordinary gift of wisdom was not sufficient to preserve him from falling into grievous and fatal errors. A fairer promise of true greatness, a more beautiful picture of juvenile piety, never was seen, than that which he exhibited at the commencement of his reign. No sadder, more humiliating, or awful spectacle can be imagined than the besotted apostacy of his old age; and to him may be applied the words of Paul (Galatians, 3. 3), of John (Revelation, 3. 17), and of Isaiah (14. 21). A love of the world, a ceaseless round of pleasure, had insensibly corrupted his heart, and produced, for a while at least, a state of mental darkness. The grace of God deserted him; and the son of the pious David — the religiously trained child of Bath-sheba (Proverbs, 31. 1-3), and pupil of Nathan, instead of showing the stability of sound principle and mature experience, became at last an old and foolish king (Ecclesiastes, 4. 13). His fall is traced to his "love of many strange women." Polygamy was tolerated among the ancient Hebrews; and, although in most countries of the East, the generality of men, from convenience and economy, confine themselves to one woman, yet a number of wives is reckoned an indication of wealth and importance, just as a numerous stud of horses and a grand equipage, are among us. The sovereign, of course, wishes to have a more numerous harem than any of his subjects; and the female establishments of many Oriental princes have, both in ancient and modern times, equaled or exceeded that of Solomon's. It is probable, therefore, that, in conformity with Oriental notions, he resorted to it as a piece of state magnificence. But in him it was unpardonable, as it was a direct and outrageous violation of the Divine law (Deuteronomy, 17. 17), and the very result which that statute was ordained to prevent was realized in him. His marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh is not censured either here or elsewhere (see ch. 3. 1). It was only his love for many strange women; for women, though in the East considered inferiors, exert often a silent but powerfully seductive influence over their husbands in the harems, as elsewhere, and so it was exemplified in Solomon. **3. he had seven hundred wives, princesses** — They were, probably, according to an existing custom, the daughters of tributary chiefs, given as hostages for the good conduct of their fathers. **concubines** — Were legitimate, but lower or secondary wives. These the chief or first wife regards without the smallest jealousy or regret, as they look up to her with feelings of respectful submission. Solomon's wives became so numerous, not all at once, but gradually; as even at an early period his taste for Oriental show seems to have led to the establishment of a considerable harem (Song, 6. 8). **4. when Solomon was old** — He could not have been more than fifty. **his wives turned away his heart after other gods** — Some, considering the lapse of Solomon into idolatry as a thing incredible, re-

gard him as merely humouring his wives in the practice of their superstition. and, in countenancing their respective rites by his presence, as giving only an outward homage—a sensible worship, in which neither his understanding nor his heart were engaged. The apology only makes matters worse, as it implies an adding of hypocrisy and contempt of God to an open breach of his law. There seems no possibility of explaining the language of the sacred historian, but as intimating that Solomon became an actual and open idolator, worshipping images of wood or stone in sight of the very temple which, in early life, he had erected to the true God. Hence that part of Olivet was called the high place of Tophet (Jeremiah, 7. 30-34), and the hill is still known as the Mount of Offense, or the Mount of Corruption (2 Kings, 23. 13).

5. **Ashtoreth** (Astarte), **Milcom** (Molech), and **Chemosh**—He built altars for these three; but, although he is described (*v.* 8) as doing the same for “all his strange wives,” there is no evidence that they had idols distinct from these, and there is no trace whatever of Egyptian idolatry. 8. **burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods**—The first was considered a higher act of homage, and is often used as synonymous with worship (2 Kings, 22. 17; 23. 5).

9-13. **GOD THREATENS HIM.** 9. **The Lord was angry with Solomon**—The Divine appearance, first at Gibeon, and then at Jerusalem, after the dedication of the temple, with the warnings given him on both occasions, had left Solomon inexcusable; and it was proper and necessary that on one who had been so signally favoured with the gifts of heaven, but who had grossly abused them, a terrible judgment should fall. The Divine sentence was announced to him probably by Ahijah; but there was mercy mingled with judgment, in the circumstance, that it should not be inflicted on Solomon personally—and that the remnant of the kingdom should be spared—“for David’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake, which had been chosen” to put God’s name there; not from a partial bias in favor of either, but that the Divine promise might stand (2 Samuel, 7). 13. **I will give one tribe to thy son**—There were left to Rehoboam the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi (2 Chronicles, 11. 12, 13); and multitudes of Israelites, who, after the schism of the kingdom, established their residence within the territory of Judah to enjoy the privileges of the true religion (ch. 12. 17). These are all reckoned as one tribe.

14-40. **SOLOMON’S ADVERSARIES.** 14. **The Lord stirred up an adversary**—*i. e.*, permitted him, through the impulse of his own ambition or revenge, to attack Israel. During the war of extermination which Joab carried on in Edom (2 Samuel, 8. 13), this Hadad, of the royal family, a mere boy when rescued from the sword of the ruthless conqueror, was carried into Egypt, hospitably entertained, and became allied with the house of the Egyptian king. In after years, the thought of his native land and his lost kingdom taking possession of his mind, he, on learning the death of David and Joab, renounced the ease, possessions and glory of his Egyptian residence, to return to Edom and attempt the recovery of his ancestral throne. The movements of this prince seem to have given much annoyance to the Hebrew government; but

as they were defeated by the numerous and strong garrisons planted throughout the Edomite territory, Hadad seems to have offered his services to Rezon, another of Solomon's adversaries (*v.* 23-25). This man, who had been general of Hadadezer, and, on the defeat of that great king, had successfully withdrawn a large force, went into the wilderness, led a predatory life, like Jephthah, David, and others, on the borders of the Syrian and Arabian deserts, and having acquired great power—at length became king in Damascus, threw off the yoke, and was “the adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon.” He was succeeded by Hadad, whose successors took the official title of Benhadad from him, the illustrious founder of the powerful kingdom of Damascene-Syria. These hostile neighbours, who had been long kept in check by the traditional fame of David's victories, took courage, and breaking out toward the latter end of Solomon's reign, must have not only disturbed his kingdom by their inroads, but greatly crippled his revenue by stopping his lucrative traffic with Tadmor and the Euphrates. 26-40. **Jeroboam**—This was an internal enemy of a still more formidable character. He was a young man of talent and energy, who, having been appointed by Solomon superintendent of the engineering works projected around Jerusalem, had risen into public notice, and on being informed by a very significant act of the prophet Ahijah of the royal destiny which, by Divine appointment, awaited him—his mind took a new turn. 29. **clad**—Rather wrapped up. The meaning is, “Ahijah, the Shilonite, the prophet, went and took a fit station *in the way*, and, in order that he might not be known, *he wrapped himself up*, so as closely to conceal himself, in a *new garment*, a *surtout*, which he afterward tore in twelve pieces. Notwithstanding this privacy, the story, and the prediction connected with it, probably reached the king's ears, and Jeroboam became a marked man. His aspiring ambition, impatient for the death of Solomon, led him to form plots and conspiracies, in consequence of which he was compelled to flee to Egypt. Though chosen of God, he would not wait the course of God's Providence, and therefore incurred the penalty of death by his criminal rebellion. The heavy exactions and compulsory labour (*v.* 28), which Solomon latterly imposed upon his subjects, when his foreign resources began to fail, had prepared the greater part of the kingdom for a revolt under so popular a damagogue as Jeroboam. 40. **Shishak**—Who harboured and encouraged the rebellious refugee, was of a different dynasty from the father-in-law of Solomon.

## CHAPTER XII.

1-5. REFUSING THE OLD MEN'S COUNSEL. I. **Rehoboam went to Shechem**—He was the eldest, if not the only son of Solomon, and had been, doubtless, designated by his father heir to the throne, as Solomon had been by David. The incident here related took place after the funeral obsequies of the late king, and the period for public mourning had past. When “all Israel came



to make him king." it was not to exercise their old right of election (1 Samuel, 10. 19-21), for, after God's promise of the perpetual sovereignty to David's posterity, their duty was submission to the authority of the rightful heir; but their object was, when making him king, to renew the conditions and stipulations to which their constitutional kings were subject (1 Samuel, 10. 25); and to the omission of rehearsing, which, under the peculiar circumstances in which Solomon was made king, they were disposed to ascribe the absolutism of his government.

**Shechem**—An ancient, venerable and central town, was the place of convocation; and it is evident, if not from the appointment of that place, at least from the tenor of their language and the concerted presence of Jeroboam, that the people were determined on revolt.

4. **Thy father made our yoke grievous**—The splendour of Solomon's court, and the magnitude of his undertakings being such that neither the tribute of dependent states, nor the presents of foreign princes, nor the profits of his commercial enterprises, were adequate to carry them on, he had been obliged, for obtaining the necessary revenue, to begin a system of heavy taxation. The people looked only to the burdens, not to the benefits they derived from Solomon's peaceful and prosperous reign—and the evils from which they demanded deliverance were civil oppressions, not idolatry,

to which they appear to have been indifferent or approved of it.

5. **he said, Depart yet for three days**—It was prudent to take the people's demand into calm and deliberate consideration. Whether, had the advice of the sage and experienced counselors been followed, any good result would have followed, it is impossible to say. It would at least have removed all pretext for the separation. But he preferred the counsel of his young companions (not in age, for they were all about forty-one, but inexperienced), who recommended prompt and decisive measures to quell the malcontents.

11. **whips . . . scorpions**—The latter, as contrasted with the former, are supposed to mean thongs thickly set with sharp iron points, used in the castigation of slaves.

15. **the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was from the Lord**—That was the overruling cause. Rehoboam's weakness (Ecclesiastes, 2. 18, 19), and inexperience in public affairs has given rise to the probable conjecture that, like many other princes in the East, he had been kept secluded in the harem till the period of his accession (Ecclesiastes, 4. 14), his father being either afraid of his aspiring to the sovereignty, like the two sons of David, or, which is more probable, afraid of prematurely exposing his imbecility. The king's haughty and violent answer to a people already filled with a spirit of discontent and exasperation, indicated so great an incapacity to appreciate the gravity of the crisis, so utter a want of common sense, as to create a belief that he was struck with judicial blindness. It was received with mingled scorn and derision. The revolt was accomplished, and yet so quietly, that Rehoboam remained in Shechem, fancying himself the sovereign of a united kingdom, until his chief tax-gatherer, who had been most imprudently sent to treat with the people, had been stoned to death. This opened his eyes, and he fled for security to Jerusalem.

**20-33. JEROBOAM MADE KING OVER THEM.** 20. **when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again** — This verse closes the parenthetical narrative begun at verse 2, and verses 21-24 resume the history from verse 1. Rehoboam determined to assert his authority, by leading a large force into the disaffected provinces. But the revolt of the ten tribes was completed, when the prophet Shemiah ordered, in the Lord's name, an abandonment of any hostile measures against the revolutionists. The army, overawed by the divine prohibition, dispersed, and the king was obliged to submit. 25. **Jeroboam built Shechem** — Destroyed by Abimelech (Judges, 9. 1-49). It was rebuilt, and perhaps fortified, by Jeroboam, as a royal residence. **built Penuel** — A ruined city with a tower (Judges, 8. 9), east of Jordan, on the north bank of the Jabbok. It was an object of importance to restore this fortress, as it lay on the caravan road from Gilead to Damascus and Palmyra, and secured his frontier on that quarter. 26. **Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David** — Having received the kingdom from God, he should have relied on the Divine protection; but he did not. With a view to withdraw the people from the temple and destroy the sacred associations connected with Jerusalem, he made serious and unwarranted innovations on the religious observances of the country, on pretext of saving the people the trouble and expense of a distant journey. *First*, he erected two golden calves — the young bulls, Apis and Mnevis, as symbols, in the Egyptian fashion of the true God, and the nearest, according to his fancy, to the figures of the cherubim. The one was placed at Dan, in the northern part of his kingdom, the other at Beth-el, the southern extremity, in sight of Jerusalem, and in which place he probably thought God was as likely to manifest himself as at Jerusalem (Genesis, 32; 2 Kings, 2. 2). The latter place was the most frequented — for the words (*v.* 30) should be rendered "the people, even to Dan, went to worship before the one" (Jeremiah, 48. 13; Amos, 4. 4, 5; 5. 5; Hosea, 5. 8; 10. 8). This innovation was a sin, both because it was setting up the worship of God by symbols and images, and departing from the place which he had chosen to put his name there. *Secondly*, he changed the feast of tabernacles from the 15th of the seventh to the 15th of the eighth month. The ostensible reason might be, that the gathering or harvest was later in the northern parts of the kingdom; but the real reason was to eradicate the old association with this, the most welcome and joyous festival of the year. 31. **made priests of the lowest of the people** — *lit.*, out of all the people, the Levites refusing to act. He himself assumed to himself the functions of the high-priest, at least, at the great festival, probably from seeing the king of Egypt conjoin the royal and sacred offices, and deeming the offices of the high-priest too great to be vested in a subject.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**1-22. JEROBOAM'S HAND WITHERS.** I. **there came a man of God out of Judah** — Who this prophet was cannot be ascertained. He came by divine authority. It could not be either Iddo or Ahijah, for both were alive after the events here related. **Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense** — It was at one of the annual festivals. The king, to give interest to the new ritual, was himself the officiating priest. The altar and its accompaniments would, of course, exhibit all the splendour of a new and gorgeously decorated temple. But the prophet foretold its utter destruction. 2. **he cried against the altar** — Which is put for the whole system of worship organized in Israel. **Behold, a child shall be born . . . Josiah by name** — This is one of the most remarkable prophecies recorded in the Scriptures; and, in its clearness, circumstantial minuteness, and exact prediction of an event that took place 360 years after it, stands in striking contrast to the obscure and ambiguous oracles of the heathen. Being publicly uttered, it must have been well known to the people; and every Jew who lived at the accomplishment of the event must have been convinced of the truth of a religion connected with such a prophecy as this. A present sign was given of the remote event predicted, in a visible fissure being miraculously made on the altar. Incensed at the man's license of speech, Jeroboam stretched out his hand, and ordered his attendants to seize the bold intruder; — that moment the king's arm became stiff and motionless, and the altar split asunder, so that the fire and ashes fell on the floor. Overawed by the effects of his impiety, Jeroboam besought the prophet's prayer. His request was acceded to and the hand was restored to its healthy state. Jeroboam was artful, and invited the prophet to the royal table, not to do him honour, or show his gratitude for the restoration of his hand, but to win, by his courtesy and liberal hospitality, a person whom he could not crush by his power. But the prophet informed him of a divine injunction expressly prohibiting him from all social intercourse with any in the place, as well as from returning the same way. The prohibition not to eat or drink in Beth-el was because all the people had become apostates from the true religion; and the reason of his not being allowed to return the same way was lest he should be recognized by any whom he had seen in going. II. **Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el** — If this were a true prophet, he was a bad man. 18. **an angel spake to me by the word of the Lord** — This circuitous mode of speaking, instead of simply saying, "the Lord spake to me," was adopted to hide an equivocation, to conceal a double meaning — an inferior sense given to the word angel — to offer a *seemingly superior* authority to persuade the prophet, while really the authority was secretly known to the speaker to be *inferior*. The "angel;" *i. e.*, messenger, was his own sons, who were worshippers, perhaps priests, at Beth-el; and as this man was governed by self-interest, and wished to curry favour with the king, whose purpose to adhere to his religious

polity, he feared, might be shaken by the portents that had occurred, his hastening after the prophet of Judah, the deception he practiced, and the urgent invitation by which, on the ground of a falsehood, he prevailed on the too facile man of God to accompany him back to his house in Beth-el, were to create an impression in the king's mind that he was an impostor, who acted in opposition to his own statement. 20-22. **he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah**—Rather, "it cried," *i. e.*, the word of the Lord.

**23-32. THE DISOBEDIENT PROPHET SLAIN BY A LION.** 24. **a lion met him by the way, and slew him**—There was a wood near Beth-el infested with lions (2 Kings, 2. 24). This sad catastrophe was a severe but necessary judgment of God, to attest the truth of the message with which the prophet had been charged. The whole circumstance of this tragic occurrence—the undevoured carcass—the untouched ass—the unmolested passengers—by the lion, though standing there, were calculated to produce an irresistible impression that the hand of God was in it. 31. **bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried**—His motive in making this request, was either that his remains might not be disturbed when the predicted events took place (see 2 Kings, 23. 18), or he had some superstitious hope of being benefited at the resurrection by being in the same grave with a man of God.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

**1-20. AHIJAH DENOUNCES GOD'S JUDGMENTS AGAINST JEROBOAM.** 1. **At that time**—A phrase used often loosely and indefinitely in sacred history. This domestic incident in the family of Jeroboam probably occurred toward the end of his reign; his son Ahijah was of age, and considered by the people the heir to the throne. 2. **Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself**—His natural and intense anxiety as a parent is here seen, blended with the deep and artful policy of an apostate king. The reason of his extreme caution was an unwillingness to acknowledge that he looked for information as to the future, not to his idols, but to the true God, and a fear that this step, if publicly known, might endanger the stability of his whole political system; and a strong impression that Ahijah, who was greatly offended with him, would, if consulted openly by his queen, either insult or refuse to receive her. For these reasons he selected his wife as, in every view, the most proper for such a secret and confidential errand, but recommended her to assume the garb and manner of a peasant woman. Strange infatuation! to suppose that the God who could reveal futurity could not penetrate a flimsy disguise. 3. **and take with thee ten loaves and cracknels, and a cruise of honey, and go to him**—This was a present in unison with the peasant character she assumed. Cracknels are a kind of sweet seed-cake. The prophet was blind, but having received Divine premonition of the pretended country woman's coming, he addressed her the moment she appeared, as the queen,

apprised her of the calamities which, in consequence of the ingratitude of Jeroboam, his apostacy, and outrageous misgovernment of Israel, impended over their house, as well as over the nation which too readily followed his idolatrous innovations. 8. **thou hast not been as my servant David**—Who, though he fell into grievous sins, repented, and always maintained the pure worship of God as enjoined by the law. 10. **I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam**—Strong expressions are here used to indicate the utter extirpation of his house; "**him** that is shut up and left in Israel," means those who were concealed with the greatest privacy, as the heirs of royalty often are where polygamy prevails; the other phrase, from the loose garments of the East, having led to a different practice from what prevails in the West, cannot refer to men; it must signify either a very young boy, or rather, perhaps, a dog, so entire would be the destruction of Jeroboam's house that none, not even a dog belonging to it, should escape. This peculiar phrase occurs only in regard to the threatened extermination of a family (1 Samuel, 25. 22-34). See the manner of extermination (ch. 16. 4; 21. 24). 12. **the child shall die**—The death and general lamentation felt throughout the country at the loss of the prince were also predicted. The reason of the profound regret shown at his death arose, according to Jewish writers, from his being decidedly opposed to the erection of the golden calves, and using his influence with his father to allow his subjects the free privilege of going to worship in Jerusalem. 13. **all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him**—The only one of Jeroboam's family who should receive the rites of sepulture. 14. **the Lord shall raise him up a king . . . but what? even now**—viz.: Baasha (ch. 15. 27); he was already raised—he was in being, though not in power. 17. **Tirzah**—A place of pre-eminent beauty (Song, 6. 4), three hours traveling east of Samaria, chosen when Israel became a separate kingdom by the first monarch, and used during three short reigns as a residence of the royal house. The fertile plains and wooded hills in that part of the territory of Ephraim, gave an opening to the formation of parks and pleasure grounds, similar to those which were the "paradise" of Assyrian and Persian monarchs. [STANLEY.] Its site is occupied by the large village of Taltise. [ROBINSON.] As soon as the queen reached the gate of the palace, she received the intelligence that her son was dying, according to the prophet's prediction. 19. **the rest of the acts of Jeroboam**—None of the threatenings denounced against this family produced any change in his policy or government.

21-24. **REHOBAM'S WICKED REIGN.** 21. **he reigned in Jerusalem**—Its particular designation as "the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there," seems given here, both as a reflection on the apostacy of the ten tribes, and as a proof of the aggravated wickedness of introducing idolatry and its attendant vices there. **his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess**—Her heathen extraction, and her influence as queen-mother are stated to account for Rehoboam's tendency to depart from the true religion. Led by the warning of

the prophet (ch. 12. 23), as well as by the large immigration of Israelites into his kingdom (ch. 12. 17; 2 Chronicles, II. 16), he continued for the first three years of his reign a faithful patron of true religion (2 Chronicles, II. 17). But afterward he began and carried a general apostacy; idolatry became the prevailing form of worship, and the religious state of the kingdom in his reign is described by the high places—the idolatrous statues—the groves and impure rites that with unchecked license were observed in them. The description is suited to the character of the Canaanitish worship.

**25-31. SHISHAK SPOILS JERUSALEM.** 25, 26. **Shishak, king of Egypt, came up**—He was the instrument in the hand of Providence for punishing the national defection. Even although this king had been Solomon's father-in-law, he was no relation of Rehoboam's; but there is a strong probability that he belonged to another dynasty (see 2 Chronicles 29. 18). He was the Sheshonk of the Egyptian monuments, who is depicted on a bas-relief at Karnak, as dragging captives, whose, from their peculiar physiognomy, are universally admitted to be Jews. 29. **Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles**—Not the book so called and comprehended in the sacred canon, but the national archives of Judah. 30. **there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam**—The former was prohibited from entering on an aggressive war; but, as the two kingdoms kept up a jealous rivalry, he might be forced into vigilant measures of defense, and frequent skirmishes would take place on the borders

## CHAPTER XV.

**1-8. ABIJAM'S WICKED REIGN OVER JUDAH.** 1. **Abijam**—His name was at first Abijah (2 Chronicles, 12. 16); "Jah," the name of God, according to an ancient fashion, being conjoined with it. But afterward, when he was found "walking in all the sins of his father," that honorable addition was withdrawn, and his name in sacred history changed into Abijam. [LIGHTFOOT.] 2. **Three years reigned he**—(Cf. v. 1 with v. 9). Parts of years are counted in Scripture as whole years. The reign began in Jeroboam's eighteenth year, continued till the nineteenth, and ended in the course of the twentieth. **his mother's name was Maachah**—Or Michaiah (2 Chronicles, 13. 2), probably altered from the one to the other on her becoming queen, as was very common under a change of circumstances. She is called the daughter of Abishalom, or Absalom (2 Chronicles, II. 21), or Uriel (2 Chronicles, 13. 2). Hence, it has been thought probable that Tamar, the daughter of Absalom (2 Samuel, 14. 27; 18. 18), had been married to Uriel, and that Maachah was their daughter. 3. **His heart was not perfect with the Lord... as the heart of David his father**—(Cf. ch. II. 4; 14. 22). He was not positively bad at first, for it appears (v. 15) that he had done something to restore the pillaged treasures of the temple. This phrase contains a comparative reference to David's heart. His doing that which was right in the

eyes of the Lord (*v.* 5) is frequently used in speaking of the kings of Judah, and means only that they did, or did not, do that which, in the general course and tendency of their government, was acceptable to God. It furnishes no evidence as to the lawfulness or piety of one specific act. 4. **For David's sake did the Lord... give him a lamp**—“A lamp” in one's house is an Oriental phrase for continuance of family name and prosperity. Abijam was not rejected only in consequence of the Divine promise to David (see ch. II. 13-36).

**9-22. ASA'S GOOD REIGN. 9. his mother's name was Maachah**—She was properly his grandmother, and she is here called, “the king's mother,” from the post of dignity which, at the beginning of his reign, she possessed. Asa, as a constitutional monarch, acted like the pious David, labouring to abolish the traces and polluting practices of idolatry, and, in pursuance of his impartial conduct, he did not spare delinquents even of the highest rank. **13. also Maachah his mother, her he removed from being queen**—The Sultana, or queen-dowager, was not necessarily the king's natural mother (see ch. 2. 19), nor was Maachah. Her title, and the privileges connected with that honour and dignity which gave her precedency among the ladies of the royal family, and great influence in the kingdom, were taken away. She was degraded for her idolatry. **because she had made an idol in a grove**—A very obscene figure, and the grove was devoted to the grossest licentiousness. His plans of religious reformation, however, were not completely carried through, “the high places were not removed” (see ch. 3. 2). The suppression of this private worship on natural or artificial hills, though a forbidden service, after the temple had been declared the exclusive place of worship, the most pious king's laws were not able to accomplish. **15. he brought in the things which his father had dedicated**—Probably the spoils which Abijam had taken from the vanquished army of Jeroboam (see 2 Chronicles, 13. 16). **and the things which himself had dedicated**—After his own victory over the Cushites (2 Chronicles, 14. 12). **16. there was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel. all their days**—Asa enjoyed a ten years' peace after Jeroboam's defeat by Abijam, and this interval was wisely and energetically spent in making internal reforms, as well as increasing the means of national defense (2 Chronicles, 14. 1-7). In the fifteenth year of his reign, however, the king of Israel commenced hostilities against him, and, invading his kingdom, erected a strong fortress at Ramah, which was near Gibeath, and only six Roman miles from Jerusalem. Afraid lest his subjects might quit his kingdom, and return to the worship of their fathers, he wished to cut off all intercourse between the two nations. Ramah stood on an eminence, overhanging a narrow ravine which separated Israel from Judah, and therefore he took up a hostile position in that place. **18-20. Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the... house of the Lord**—Asa's religious character is now seen to decline. He trusted not in the Lord (2 Chronicles, 16. 7). In this emergency Asa solicited the powerful aid of the king of Damascene-Syria; and to bribe him to break off his alliance with

Baasha, he transmitted to him the treasure lying in the temple and palace. The Syrian mercenaries were gained. Instances are to be found both in the ancient and modern history of the East, of the violation of treaties equally sudden and unscrupulous, through the presentation of some tempting bribe. Ben-hadad poured an army into the northern provinces of Israel, and having captured some cities in Galilee, on the borders of Syria, compelled Baasha to withdraw from Ramah back within his own territories. 18. **Benhadad**—See ch. 11. 24. 22. **Then Asa made a proclamation**—The fortifications which Baasha had erected at Ramah were demolished, and with the materials were built other defenses, where Asa thought they were needed; at Geba (now Jeba) and Mizpah (now Neby Samuel)—about two hours' traveling north of Jerusalem. 23. **in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet**—See 2 Chronicles, 16. 10-12, where an additional proof is given of his religious degeneracy.

25-34. **NADAB'S WICKED REIGN.** 25. **Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign**—No record is given of him, except his close adherence to the bad policy of his father. 28. **Baasha smote him at Gibbethon**—This town, within the tribe of Dan, was given to the Levites (Joshua, 19. 44). It lay on the Philistine borders, and having been seized by that people, Nadab laid siege to recover it. 29. **When he reigned, he smote all the house of Jeroboam**—It was according to a barbarous practice, too common in the East, for an usurper to extirpate all rival candidates for the throne; but it was an accomplishment of Ahijah's prophecy concerning Jeroboam (ch. 14. 10, 11).

## CHAPTER XVI.

1-8. **JEHU'S PROPHECY AGAINST BAASHA.** 1. **Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu**—This is the only incident recorded in the life of this prophet. His father was also a prophet (2 Chronicles, 16. 7). 2. **Forasmuch as I exalted thee**—The doom he pronounced on Baasha was exactly the same as denounced against Jeroboam and his posterity. Though he had waded through slaughter to his throne, he owed his elevation to the appointment or permission of Him "by whom kings reign." **over my people Israel**—With all their errors and lapses into idolatry, they were not wholly abandoned by God. He still showed His interest in them by sending prophets and working miracles in their favour, and possessed a multitude of faithful worshippers in the kingdom of Israel. 7. **Also by the hand of the prophet Jehu**—This is not another prophecy, but merely an addition by the sacred historian, explanatory of the death of Baasha and the extinction of his family. The doom pronounced against Jeroboam (ch. 14. 9) did not entitle him to take the execution of the sentence into his own hands; but, from his following the same calf-worship, he had evidently plotted the conspiracy and murder of that king in furtherance of his own ambitious designs, and hence, in his own assassination, he met the just reward of his deeds. The simili-



tude to Jeroboam extends to their deaths as well as their lives—the reign of their sons and the ruin of their families. 8. **Began Elah the son of Baasha to reign**—(Cf. ch. 15. 33). From this it will appear that Baasha died in the twenty-third year of his reign (see ch. 15. 2), and Elah, who was a prince of dissolute habits, reigned not fully two years.

9-22. **ZIMRI'S CONSPIRACY.** 9. **Zimri... conspired against him**—During a carousal, in the house of his chamberlain, Zimri slew him, and, having seized the sovereignty, endeavoured to consolidate his throne by the massacre of all the royal race. 15. **Zimri reigned seven days**—The news of his conspiracy soon spread, and the army having proclaimed their general, Omri, king, that officer immediately raised the siege at Gibbethon, and marched directly against the capital in which the usurper had established himself. Zimri soon saw that he was not in circumstances to hold out against the whole forces of the kingdom; so, shutting himself up in the palace, he set it on fire, and, like Sardanapalus, chose to perish himself and reduce all to ruins, rather than that the palace and royal treasures should fall into the hands of his successful rival. The seven days' reign may refer either to the brief duration of his royal authority, or the period in which he enjoyed unmolested tranquillity in the palace. 19. **For his sins which he sinned**—This violent end was a just retribution for his crimes. "His walking in the ways of Jeroboam" might have been manifested either by the previous course of his life, or by his decrees published on his ascension, when he made a strong effort to gain popularity by announcing his continued support of the calf-worship. 21, 22. **Then were the people divided into two parts**—The factions that ensued occasioned a four years' duration (Cf. v. 15 with v. 23) of anarchy or civil war. Whatever might be the public opinion of Omri's merits, a large body of the people disapproved of the mode of his election, and declared for Tibni. The army, however, as usual in such circumstances (and they had the will of Providence favouring them), prevailed over all opposition, and Omri became undisputed possessor of the throne. **Tibni died**—The *Heb.* does not enable us to determine whether his death was violent or natural.

23-28. **OMRI BUILDS SAMARIA.** 23. **In the thirty and first year of Asa . . . began Omri to reign**—The twelve years of his reign are computed from the beginning of his reign, which was in the twenty-seventh year of Asa's reign. He held a contested reign for four years with Tibni; and then, at the dates stated in this verse, entered on a sole and peaceful reign of eight years. 24. **he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer**—The palace of Tirzah being in ruins, Omri, in selecting the site of his royal residence, was naturally influenced by considerations both of pleasure and advantage. In the center of a wide amphitheater of mountains, about six miles from Shechem, rises an oblong hill with steep, yet accessible sides, and a long flat top extending east and west, and rising 500 or 600 feet above the valley. What Omri in all probability built as a mere palatial residence, became the capital of the kingdom instead of Shechem. It was as though Versailles had taken

the place of Paris, or Windsor of London. The choice of Omri was admirable, in selecting a position which combined in a union not elsewhere found in Palestine, strength, beauty and fertility. [STANLEY.] **two talents of silver** — £684. Shemer had, probably, made it a condition of the sale, that the name should be retained. But as city and palace were built there by Omri, it was in accordance with Eastern custom to call it after the founder. The Assyrians did so, and on a tablet dug out of the ruins of Nineveh, an inscription was found relating to Samaria, which is called Beth-Khumri — **the house of Omri**. [LAYARD.] (See 2 Kings, 17. 5.) 25-27. **But Omri wrought evil** — The character of Omri's reign and his death are described in the stereotyped form used toward all the successors of Jeroboam, in respect both to policy as well as time. 29-33. **Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him** — The worship of God by symbols had hitherto been the offensive form of apostasy in Israel; but now gross idolatry is openly patronized by the court. This was done through the influence of Jezebel, Ahab's queen. She was "the daughter of Eth-Baal, king of the Zidonians." He was priest of Ashteroth or Astarte, who, having murdered Philetas, king of Tyre, ascended the throne of that kingdom, being the eighth king since Hiram. Jezebel was the worthy daughter of this regicide and idol-priest — and, on her marriage with Ahab, never rested till she had got all the forms of her native Tyrian worship introduced into her adopted country. 32. **reared up an altar for Baal** — *i. e.*, the sun worshipped under various images. Ahab set up one (2 Kings, 3. 2), probably as the Tyrian Hercules, in the temple in Samaria. No human sacrifices were offered — the fire was kept constantly burning — the priests officiated barefoot — dancing and kissing the image (ch. 19. 18) were among the principal rites.

**34. JOSHUA'S CURSE FULFILLED UPON HIEL THE BUILDER OF JERICHO.** 34. **In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho** — (see Joshua, 6. 26). The curse took effect on the family of this reckless man; but whether his eldest son died at the time of laying the foundation, and the youngest at the completion of the work, or whether he lost all his sons in rapid succession, till, at the end of the undertaking, he found himself childless, the poetical form of the ban does not enable us to determine. Some modern commentators think there is no reference either to the natural or violent deaths of Hiel's sons; but that he began in presence of his eldest son, but some unexpected difficulties, losses or obstacles, delayed the completion till his old age, when the gates were set up in the presence of his youngest son. But the curse *was* fulfilled more than 500 years after it was uttered; and from Jericho being inhabited after Joshua's time (Judges, 3. 13; 2 Samuel, 10. 5), it has been supposed that the act against which the curse was directed, was an attempt at the restoration of the walls — the very walls which had been miraculously cast down. It seems to have lain within the territory of Israel; and the unresisted act of Hiel affords a painful evidence how far the people of Israel had lost all knowledge of, or respect for, the word of God.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**1-7. ELIJAH, PROPHECYING AGAINST AHAB, IS SENT TO THE RITH.** 1. **Elijah the Tishbite**—This prophet is introduced as abruptly as Melchisedec—his birth, parents, and call to the prophetic office being alike unrecorded. He is supposed to be called the Tishbite from Tisbeh, a place east of Jordan. **who was of the inhabitants**—Or residents of Gilead, implying that he was not an Israelite, but an Ishmaelite, as MICHAELIS conjectures, for there were many of that race on the confines of Gilead. The employment of a Gentile as an extraordinary minister might be to rebuke and shame the apostate people of Israel. **said unto Ahab**—The prophet appears to have been warning this apostate king how fatal, both to himself and people, would be the reckless course he was pursuing, and the failure of Elijah's efforts to make an impression on the obstinate heart of Ahab, is shown by the penal prediction uttered at parting. **before whom I stand**—*i. e.*, whom I serve (Deuteronomy, 18. 5). **there shall not be dew nor rain these years**—Not absolutely, but the dew and the rain should not fall in the usual and necessary quantities. Such a suspension of moisture was sufficient to answer the corrective purposes of God, while an absolute drought must have converted the whole country into an uninhabitable waste. **but according to my word**—Not uttered in spite, vengeance or caprice, but as the minister of God. The impending calamity was in answer to his earnest prayer, and a chastisement intended for the spiritual revival of Israel. Drought was the threatened punishment of national idolatry (Deut. II. 16, 17; 28. 23). 2, 3. **the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, &c**—At first the king may have spurned the prediction as the utterance of a vain enthusiast; but when he found the drought last and increase in severity, he sought Elijah, who, as it was necessary that he should be far removed from either the violence or the importunities of the king, was divinely directed to repair to a place of retreat, perhaps a cave on "the brook Cherith, that is, *before,*" *i. e.*, east of Jordan. Tradition points it out in a small winter torrent, a little below the ford at Bethshan. 6. **the ravens brought him bread**—The idea of such unclean and voracious birds being employed to feed the prophet has appeared to many so strange, that they have laboured to make out the *Orebim*, which in our version, has been rendered ravens, to be, as the word is used (Ezekiel, 27. 27), merchants or Arabians (2 Chronicles, 21. 16. Nehemiah, 4. 7), or the citizens of Arabah, near Bethshan (Joshua, 15. 6; 18. 18). But the common rendering (ch. 18. 19) is, in our opinion, preferable to these conjectures; and, if Elijah was miraculously fed by ravens, it is idle to inquire where they found the bread and the flesh, for God would direct them. After the lapse of a year the brook dried up, and this was a new trial to Elijah's faith.

**8-16. HE IS SENT TO A WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH.** 8. **the word of the Lord came to him**—Zarephath or Sarepta, now Surafend,

whither he was directed to go, was far away on the western coast of Palestine, about nine miles south of Sidon, and within the dominions of Jezebel's impious father, where the famine also prevailed. Meeting, at his entrance into the town, the very woman who was appointed by Divine providence to support him, his faith was severely tested by learning from her that her supplies were exhausted, and that she was preparing her last meal for herself and son. The Spirit of God having prompted him to ask, and her to grant, some necessary succour, she received a prophet's reward (Matthew, 10. 41, 42), and, for the one meal afforded to him, God, by a miraculous increase of the little stock, afforded many to her.

**17-24. HE RAISES HER SON TO LIFE. 17. the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick**—A severe domestic calamity seems to have led her to think that, as God had shut up heaven upon a sinful land in consequence of the prophet, she was suffering on a similar account. Without answering her bitter upbraiding, the prophet takes the child, lays it on his bed, and after a very earnest prayer, had the happiness of seeing its restoration, and along with it, gladness to the widow's heart and home. The prophet was sent to this widow, not merely for his own security, but on account of her faith, to strengthen and promote which he was directed to go to her rather than to many widows in Israel, who would have eagerly received him on the same privileged terms of exemption from the grinding famine. The relief of her bodily necessities became the preparatory means of supplying her spiritual wants, and bringing her and her son, through the teaching of the prophet, to a clear knowledge of God, and a firm faith in his word (Luke, 4. 25).

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**1-16. ELIJAH MEETS OBADIAH. 1. the third year**—In the New Testament, it is said there was no rain "for the space of three years and six months." The early rain fell in our March, the latter rain in our October. Though Ahab might have at first ridiculed Elijah's announcement, yet when neither of these rains fell in their seasons, he was incensed against the prophet as the cause of the national judgment, and compelled him, with God's direction, to consult his safety in flight. This was six months after the king was told there would be neither dew nor rain, and from this period the three years in this passage are computed. **Go, show thyself unto Ahab**—The king had remained obdurate and unreformed. Another opportunity was to be given him of repentance, and Elijah was sent in order to declare to him the cause of the national judgment, and to promise him, on condition of his removing it, the immediate blessing of rain. **2. Elijah went**—A marvelous proof of the natural intrepidity of this prophet, of his moral courage; and his unflinching confidence in the protecting care of God, that he ventured to approach the presence of the raging lion. **there was a sore famine in Samaria**—Elijah found

that the famine was pressing with intense severity in the capital. Corn must have been obtained for the people from Egypt or the adjoining countries, else life could not have been sustained for three years; but Ahab, with the chamberlain of his royal household, is represented as giving a personal search for pasture to his cattle. On the banks of rivulets, grass, tender shoots of grass, might naturally be expected; but the water being dried up, the verdure would disappear. In the pastoral districts of the East it would be reckoned a most suitable occupation still for a king or chief to go at the head of such an expedition. Ranging over a large tract of country, Ahab had gone through one district, Obadiah through another. 3. **Obadiah feared the Lord greatly**—Although he did not follow the course taken by the Levites and the majority of pious Israelites at that time of emigration into Judah (2 Chronicles, II. 13-16), he was a secret and sincere worshipper. He probably considered the violent character of the government, and his power of doing some good to the persecuted people of God as a sufficient excuse for his not going to worship in Jerusalem. 4. **an hundred prophets**—Not men endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the prophetic office, but who were devoted to the service of God, preaching, praying, praising, &c. (1 Samuel 10. 10-12). **fed them with bread and water**—These articles are often used to include sustenance of any kind. As this succour must have been given them, at the hazard, not only of his place, but his life, it was a strong proof of his attachment to the true religion. 7-16. **as Obadiah was in the way . . . Elijah met him**—Deeming it imprudent to rush, without previous intimation into Ahab's presence, the prophet solicited Obadiah to announce his return to Ahab. The commission, with a delicate allusion to the perils he had already encountered in securing others of God's servants, was, in very touching terms, declined, as unkind and peculiarly hazardous. But Elijah having dispelled all the apprehensions entertained about the Spirit's carrying him away, Obadiah undertook to convey the prophet's message to Ahab, and solicit an interview. But Ahab, bent on revenge, or impatient for the appearance of rain, went himself to meet Elijah. 17, 18. **Art thou he that troubleth Israel**—A violent altercation took place. Ahab thought to awe him into submission, but the prophet boldly and undisguisedly told the king that the national calamity was traceable chiefly to his own and his family's patronage and practice of idolatry. But, while rebuking the sins, Elijah paid all due respect to the high rank of the offender, and urged the king to convene, by virtue of his royal mandate, a public assembly, in whose presence it might be solemnly decided which was the troubler of Israel. The appeal could not well be resisted, and Ahab, from whatever motives, consented to the proposal. God directed and overruled the issue. 19. **Ahab gathered the prophets of Baal . . . the prophets of the groves**—From the sequel it appears that the former only came. The latter, anticipating some evil, evaded the king's command. **they did eat at Jezebel's table**—*i. e.*, not at the royal table where herself dined, but were maintained from her kitchen establishment (see 1 Samuel 20. 24 : ch 4. 22). They were

the priests of Astarte, the Zidonian goddess. 20. **Mount Carmel** — Is a bold bluff promontory, which extends from the western coast of Palestine, at the bay of Acre, for many miles eastward to the central hills of Samaria. It is a long range, presenting many summits, and intersected by a number of small ravines. The spot where the contest took place is situated at the eastern extremity, which is also the highest point of the whole ridge. It is called El-Mohhraka, "the Burning," or "the Burnt place." No spot could have been better adapted for the thousands of Israel to have stood drawn up on those gentle slopes. The rock shoots up in an almost perpendicular wall of more than 200 feet in height, on the side of the vale of Esdrælon. This wall made it visible over the whole plain, and from all the surrounding heights, where gazing multitudes would be stationed. 21-40. **Elijah said to the people, How long halt ye** — They had long been attempting to conjoin the service of God with that of Baal. It was an impracticable union, and the people were so struck with a sense of their own folly, or dread of the king's displeasure, that they "answered not a word." Elijah proposed to decide for them the controversy between God and Baal, by an appeal, not to the authority of the law, for that would have no weight, but by a visible token from heaven. As fire was the element over which Baal was supposed to preside, he proposed that two bullocks should be slain, and placed on separate altars of wood, the one for Baal, the other for God, and on which ever the fire should descend to consume it, the event should determine the true God, whom it was their duty to serve. The proposal, appearing every way reasonable, was received by the people with unanimous approval. The priests of Baal commenced the ceremony by calling on their god. In vain did they continue invoking their senseless deity from morning till noon, and from noon till evening, uttering the most piercing cries, using the most frantic gesticulations, and mingling their blood with the sacrifice — no response was heard — no fire descended. Elijah exposed their folly and imposture with the severest irony; and, as the day was far advanced, commenced his operations. Inviting the people to approach and see the entire proceeding, he first repaired an old altar of God, which Jezebel had demolished — then, having arranged the cut pieces of the bullock, he caused four barrels or jars of water to be dashed all over the altar and round in the trench. Once, twice, a third time this precaution was taken, and then, when he had offered an earnest prayer, the miraculous fire descended (Leviticus, 9. 24; Judges, 6. 21; 13. 20; 1 Chronicles, 21. 26; 2 Chronicles, 7. 1), and consumed not only the sacrifice, but the very stones of the altar. The impression on the minds of the people was that of admiration mingled with awe; and with one voice they acknowledged the supremacy of Jehovah as the true God. Taking advantage of their excited feelings, Elijah called on them to seize the priestly impostors, and by their blood fill the channel of the river (Kishon), which, in consequence of their idolatries, the drought had dried up — a direction which, severe and relentless as it seems, it was his duty as God's minister to give (Deuteronomy, 13. 5; 18. 20).

The natural features of the mount exactly correspond with the details of this narrative. The conspicuous summit, 1635 feet above the sea, on which the altars were placed, presents an esplanade spacious enough for the king and the priests of Baal to stand on the one side, and Elijah on the other. It is a rocky soil, on which there is abundance of loose stones, to furnish the 12 stones of which the altar was built—a bed of thick earth in which a trench could be dug; and yet the earth not so loose that the water poured into it would be absorbed; 250 feet beneath the altar plateau, there is a perennial fountain which, being close to the altar of the Lord, might not have been accessible to the people, and whence, therefore, even in that season of severe drought, Elijah could procure those copious supplies of water which he poured over the altar. The distance between this spring and the site of the altar is so short, as to make it perfectly possible to go thrice thither and back again; whereas, it must have been impossible, *once* in an afternoon, to fetch water from the sea. [VAN DE VELDE.] The summit is 1000 feet above the Kishon, which nowhere runs from the sea so close to the base of the mount as just beneath El-Mohhraka; so that the priests of Baal could, in a few minutes, be taken down “to the brook (torrent), and slain there.”

**41-46. ELIJAH, BY PRAYER, OBTAINS RAIN. 42. Ahab went up to eat and drink**—Ahab, kept in painful excitement by the agonizing scene, had eaten nothing all the day. He was recommended to refresh himself without a moment's delay; and, while the king was thus occupied, the prophet, far from taking rest, was absorbed in prayer for the fulfillment of the promise (*v. 1*). **put his face between his knees**—A posture of earnest supplication still used. **43. Go up now, look toward the sea**—From the place of worship there is a *small eminence*, which, on the west and north-west side, intercepts the view of the sea. [STANLEY, VAN DE VELDE.] It can be ascended in a few minutes, and presents a wide prospect of the Mediterranean. Six times the servant went up—but the sky was clear—the sea tranquil. On the seventh he descried the sign of approaching rain. **44. Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand**—The clearness of the sky renders the smallest speck distinctly visible; and this is in Palestine the uniform precursor of rain. It rises higher and higher, and becomes larger and larger with astonishing celerity, till the whole heaven is black, and the cloud bursts in a deluge of rain. **Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not**—Either by the river Kishon being suddenly so swollen as to be impassable, or from the deep layer of dust in the arid plain being turned into thick mud, so as to impede the wheels. **45. Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel**—Now Zerin, a distance of about ten miles. This race was performed in the midst of a tempest of rain. But all rejoiced at it, as diffusing a sudden refreshment over all the land of Jezreel. **46. Elijah girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab**—It was anciently, and still is, in some countries of the East, customary for kings and nobles to have runners before their chariot, who are tightly girt for the purpose. The prophet, like the Bedouins of his native Gilead, had been

trained to run ; and, as the hand of the Lord was with him, he continued with unabated agility and strength. It was, in the circumstances, a most proper service for Elijah to render. It tended to strengthen the favourable impression made on the heart of Ahab and furnished an answer to the cavils of Jezebel ; for it showed that he who was so zealous in the service of God, was, at the same time, devotedly loyal to his king. The result of this solemn and decisive contest was a heavy blow and great discouragement to the cause of idolatry. But subsequent events seem to prove that the impressions though deep, were but partial and temporary.

## CHAPTER XIX

**1-3. ELIJAH FLEES TO BEER-SHEBA.** 3. **he arose and went for his life**—He entered Jezreel full of hope. But a message from the incensed and hard-hearted queen, vowing speedy vengeance for her slaughtered priests, dispelled all his bright visions of the future. It is probable, however, that in the present temper of the people, even she could not have dared to lay violent hands on the Lord's servant, and purposely threatened him because she could do no more. The threat produced the intended effect, for his faith suddenly failed him. He fled out of the kingdom into the southernmost part of the territories in Judah ; nor did he deem himself safe even there, but, dismissing his servant, he resolved to seek refuge among the mountain recesses of Sinai, and there longed for death (James, 5. 17). This sudden and extraordinary depression of mind arose from too great confidence inspired by the miracles wrought at Carmel, and by the disposition the people evinced there. Had he remained steadfast and immovable, the impression on the mind of Ahab and the people generally might have been followed by good results. But he had been exalted above measure (2 Corinthians, 12. 7-9), and being left to himself, the great prophet, instead of showing the indomitable spirit of a martyr, fled from his post of duty.

**4-18. HE IS COMFORTED BY AN ANGEL.** 4. **went a day's journey into the wilderness**—On the way from Beersheba to Horeb—a wide expanse of sand-hills, covered with the Retem (not juniper, but broom shrubs), whose tall and spreading branches, with their white leaves, afford a very cheering and refreshing shade. His gracious God did not lose sight of his fugitive servant, but watched over him, and miraculously ministering to his wants, enabled him, in a better but not wholly right frame of mind, by virtue of that supernatural supply, to complete his contemplated journey. In the solitude of Sinai God appeared to instruct him. **What doest thou here, Elijah?**—was a searching question addressed to one who had been called to so arduous and urgent a mission as his. By an awful exhibition of Divine power, he was made aware of the Divine speaker who addressed him ; his attention was arrested, his petulance was silenced, his heart was touched and he was bid without delay to return to the land of Israel, and prosecute the Lord's work there. To convince him that an idola-



trous nation will not be unpunished, he commissions him to anoint three persons who were destined in Providence to avenge God's controversy with the people of Israel. Anointing is used synonymously with appointment (Judges, 9. 8), and is applied to all named, although Jehu alone had the consecrated oil poured over his head. They were all three destined to be eminent instruments in achieving the destruction of idolaters, though in different ways. But of the three commissions, Elijah personally executed only one, viz.: the call of Elisha to be his assistant and successor, and by him the other two were accomplished (2 Kings, 8. 7-13; 9. 1-10). Having thus satisfied the fiery zeal of the erring but sincere and pious prophet, the Lord proceeded to correct the erroneous impression under which Elijah had been labouring, of his being the sole adherent of the true religion in the land; for God, who seeth in secret, and knew all that were his, knew that there were 7,000 persons who had not done homage (*lit.*, kissed the hand) to Baal. 16. **Abel-meholah** — *i. e.* the meadow of dancing in the valley of the Jordan.

19-21. ELISHA FOLLOWS ELIJAH. 19. **Elisha the son of Shaphat** — Most probably he belonged to a family distinguished for piety, and for their opposition to the prevailing calf-worship. **plowing with twelve yoke of oxen** — Indicating that he was a man of substance. **Elijah cast his mantle upon him** — This was an investiture with the prophetic office. It is in this way that the Brahmins, the Persian Sooffees, and other priestly or sacred characters in the East are appointed — a mantle being, by some eminent priest, thrown across their shoulders. Elisha had probably been educated in the schools of the prophets. 20. **what have I done to thee?** — *i. e.*, Go, but keep in mind the solemn ceremony I have just performed on thee. It is not I but God who calls thee. Do not allow any earthly affection to detain you from obeying his call. 21. **took a yoke of oxen** — Having hastily prepared (2 Samuel, 24. 22) a farewell entertainment to his family and friends, he left his native place and attached himself to Elijah as his minister.

## CHAPTER XX.

1-12. BEN-HADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA. 1. **Ben-hadad the king of Syria** — This monarch was the son of that Ben-hadad who, in the reign of Baasha, made a raid on the northern towns of Galilee (ch. 15. 20). The thirty-two kings that were confederate with him were probably tributary princes. The ancient kings of Syria and Phœnicia ruled only over a single city, and were independent of each other, except when one great city, as Damascus, acquired the ascendancy, and even then they were allied only in time of war. The Syrian army encamped at the gates and besieged the town of Samaria. 3. **Thus saith Ben-hadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine** — To this message sent him during the siege, Ahab returned a tame and submissive answer, probably thinking it meant no more than an exaction of tribute. But the demand was repeated with greater insolence, and yet, from the abject character of Ahab, there

is reason to believe he would have yielded to this arrogant claim also, had not the voice of his subjects been raised against it. Ben-hadad's object in these and other boastful menaces was to intimidate Ahab. But the weak sovereign began to show a little more spirit, as appears in his abandoning "my lord the king," for the single "tell him," and giving him a dry but sarcastic hint to glory no more till the victory is won. Kindling into a rage at the cool defiance, Ben-hadad gave orders for the immediate sack of the city. **12. as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions** — Booths made of branches of trees and brushwood, which were reared for kings in the camp, as they still are for Turkish Pashas or Agas in their expeditions. [KEIL.] **set yourselves in array** — Invest the city.

**13-20. THE SYRIANS ARE SLAIN.** **13. behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab** — Though the king and people of Israel had highly offended Him, God had not utterly cast them off. He still cherished designs of mercy toward them, and here, though unasked, gave them a signal proof of His interest in them, by a prophet's animating announcement that the Lord would, that day, deliver the mighty hosts of the enemy into his hand by means of a small, feeble, inadequate band. Conformably to the prophet's instructions, 232 young men went boldly out toward the camp of the enemy, while 7,000 more, apparently volunteers, followed at some little distance, or posted themselves at the gate, to be ready to re-inforce those in front if occasion required it. Ben-hadad, with his vassals and princes, were already, at that early hour — scarcely mid-day — deep in their cups, and though informed of this advancing company, yet confiding in his numbers, or it may be excited with wine, he ordered with indifference the proud intruders to be taken alive, whether they came with peaceable or hostile intentions. It was more easily said than done; the young men smote right and left, making terrible havoc among their intended captors; and their attack, together with the sight of the 7,000 who soon rushed forward to mingle in the fray, created a panic in the Syrian army, who immediately took to flight. Ben-hadad himself escaped the pursuit of the victors on a fleet horse, surrounded by a squadron of horse-guards. This glorious victory, won so easily, and with such a paltry force opposed to overwhelming numbers, was granted that Ahab and his people might know (*v.* 13) that God is the Lord. But we do not read of this acknowledgment being made, or of any sacrifices being offered in token of their mutual gratitude. **22. the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said** — The same prophet who had predicted the victory, shortly re-appeared, admonishing the king to take every precaution against a renewal of hostilities on the following campaign. **at the return of the year** — *i. e.*, in spring, when, on the cessation of the rainy season, military campaigns (*2 Samuel*, II. 1) were anciently begun. It happened as the prophet had forewarned. Brooding over their late disastrous defeat, the attendants of Ben-hadad ascribed the misfortune to two causes — the one arose from the principles of heathenism which led them to consider the gods of Israel as "gods of the hills;" whereas,

their power to all the Israelites would be gone, if the battle was maintained on the plains. The other cause to which the Syrian courtiers traced their defeat at Samaria, was the presence of the tributary kings, who had probably been the first to take flight; and they recommended "captains to be put in their rooms." Approving of these recommendations, Ben-hadad renewed his invasion of Israel the next spring by the siege of Aphek in the valley of Jezreel (1 Samuel, 29. 1, with 28. 4), not far from Endor. 27. **like two little flocks of kids**—Goats are never seen in large flocks, or scattered, like sheep; and hence the two small but compact divisions of the Israelite force are compared to goats, not sheep. Humanly speaking, that little handful of men must have been overpowered by numbers. But a prophet was sent to the small Israelite army to announce the victory, in order to convince the Syrians that the God of Israel was omnipotent everywhere, in the valley as well as on the hills. And, accordingly, after the two armies had pitched opposite each other for seven days, they came to an open battle. 100,000 Syrians lay dead on the field, while the fugitives took refuge in Aphek, and there, crowding on the city walls, they endeavoured to make a stand against their pursuers; but the old walls, giving way under the incumbent weight, fell and buried 27,000 in the ruins. Ben-hadad succeeded in extricating himself, and, with his attendants, sought concealment in the city, fleeing from chamber to chamber; or, as some think it, an inner chamber, *i. e.*, an harem; but seeing no ultimate means to escape, he was advised to throw himself on the tender mercies of the Israelitish monarch. 32. **Put ropes on their heads**—Captives were dragged by ropes round their necks in companies, as is depicted on the monuments of Egypt. Their voluntary attitude and language of submission flattered the pride of Ahab, who, little concerned about the dishonour done to the God of Israel by the Syrian king, and thinking of nothing but victory, paraded his clemency, called the vanquished king "his brother," invited him to sit in the royal chariot, and dismissed him with a covenant of peace. 34. **Streets for thee in Damascus**—Implying that a quarter of that city was to be assigned to Jews, with the free exercise of their religion and laws, under a judge of their own. This misplaced kindness to a proud and impious idolater, so unbecoming a theocratic monarch, exposed Ahab to the same censure and fate as Saul (1 Samuel, 15. 9, &c.). It was in opposition to God's purpose in giving him the victory.

35-42. A PROPHET REPROVES HIM. 35. **Smite me**—This prophet is supposed (*v.* 8) to have been Micaiah. The refusal of his neighbour to smite the prophet was manifestly wrong, as it was a withholding of necessary aid to a prophet in the discharge of a duty to which he had been called by God, and it was severely punished, as a beacon to warn others (see ch. 13. 2-24). The prophet found a willing assistant, and then, waiting for Ahab, leads the king unconsciously, in the parabolic manner of Nathan (2 Samuel, 12) to pronounce his own doom; and this consequent punishment was forthwith announced by a prophet (see ch. 21). 39. **a talent of silver** ~ £342.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-4. NABOTH REFUSES AHAB HIS VINEYARD. 1. Naboth the Jezreelite, had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel**—Ahab was desirous, from its contiguity to the palace, to possess it for a vegetable garden. He proposed to Naboth to give him a better in exchange, or to obtain it by purchase; but the owner declined to part with it; and, in persisting in his refusal, Naboth was not actuated by any feelings of disloyalty or disrespect to the king, but solely from a conscientious regard to the Divine law, which, for important reasons, had prohibited the sale of a paternal inheritance; or if, through extreme poverty or debt, an assignment of it to another was unavoidable, the conveyance was made on the condition of its being redeemable at any time; at all events, of its reverting at the jubilee to the owner. In short, it could not be alienated from the family, and it was on this ground that Naboth (*v.* 3) refused to comply with the king's demand. It was not, therefore, any rudeness or disrespect that made Ahab heavy and displeased, but his sulky and pettish demeanour betrays a spirit of selfishness that could not brook to be disappointed of a favourite object, and that would have pushed him into lawless tyranny had he possessed any natural force of character. **4. turned away his face**—Either to conceal from his attendants the vexation of spirit he felt, or, by the affectation of great sorrow, rouse them to devise some means of gratifying his wishes.

**5-16. JEZEBEL CAUSES NABOTH TO BE STONED. 7. Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard**—No sooner does Jezebel learn the cause of her husband's distress, than, after upbraiding him for his pusillanimity and bidding him act as a king, she tells him to trouble himself no more about such a trifle, she would guarantee the possession of the vineyard. **Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel**—This is not so much a question as an exclamation—a sarcastic taunt: "A pretty king thou art! Canst thou use thy power and take what thy heart is set upon?" **8. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal**—The seal-ring contained the name of the king, and gave validity to the documents to which it was affixed (*Esther*, 8. 8; *Daniel*, 6. 17). By allowing her the use of his signet-ring, Ahab passively consented to Jezebel's proceeding. Being written in the king's name, it had the character of a royal mandate. **sent the letters to the elders and nobles that were in his city**—They were the civic authorities of Jezreel, and would, in all likelihood, be the creatures and fit tools of Jezebel. It is evident that, though Ahab had recently been in Jezreel, when he made the offer to Naboth, both he and Jezreel were now in Samaria (*ch.* 20. 43). **9. Proclaim a fast, &c.**—Those obsequious and unprincipled magistrates did according to orders. Pretending that a heavy guilt lay on one, or some unknown party, who was charged with blaspheming God and the king, and that Ahab was threatening vengeance on the whole city unless the culprit were discovered and punished, they assembled the people to observe a

solemn fast. Fasts were commanded on extraordinary occasions, affecting the public interests of the state (2 Chronicles, 20. 3; Ezra, 8. 21; Joel, 1. 14; 2. 15; Jonah, 3. 5). The wicked authorities of Jezreel, by proclaiming the fast, wished to give an external appearance of justice to their proceedings, and convey an impression among the people, that Naboth's crime amounted to treason against the king's life. **set Naboth on high** — During a trial the panel, or accused person, was placed on a high seat, in the presence of all the court. But, as the guilty person was supposed to be unknown, the setting of Naboth on high among the people must have been owing to his being among the distinguished men of the place. 13. **there came in two men** — Worthless fellows, who had been bribed to swear a falsehood. The law required two witnesses in capital offenses (Deuteronomy, 17. 6; 19. 15; Numbers, 35. 30; Matthew, 26. 60). Cursing God and cursing the king are mentioned in the law (Exodus, 22. 28) as offenses closely connected; the king of Israel being the earthly representative of God in his kingdom. **they carried him out of the city and stoned him** — The law, which forbade cursing the rulers of the people, does not specify the penalty for this offense; but either usage had sanctioned, or the authorities of Jezreel had originated, stoning as the proper punishment. It was always inflicted out of the city (Acts 7. 58.) 14-16. **Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession** — Naboth's execution having been announced, and his family being involved in the same fatal sentence (2 Kings, 9. 26), his property became forfeited to the crown, not by law, but traditional usage (see 2 Samuel, 16. 4). **Ahab rose to go down** — From Samaria to Jezreel.

17-29. ELIJAH DENOUNCES JUDGMENTS AGAINST AHAB AND JEZEBEL. 17-19. **Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?** — While Ahab was in the act of surveying his ill-gotten possession, Elijah, by Divine commission, stood before him. The appearance of the prophet, at such a time, was ominous of evil, but his language was much more so (Ezekiel, 45. 8; 46. 16-18). Instead of shrinking with horror from the atrocious crime, Ahab eagerly hastened to his newly acquired property. **in the place where dogs licked, &c.** — A righteous retribution of Providence. The prediction was accomplished, not in Jezreel, but in Samaria; and not on Ahab personally, in consequence of his repentance (*v.* 29), but on his son (2 Kings, 9. 25). The words "in the place where" might be rendered "in like manner as." 20. **Thou hast sold thyself to work evil** — *i. e.*, allowed sin to acquire the unchecked and habitual mastery over thee (2 Kings, 17. 17; Romans, 7. 11). 21, 22. **I will make thine house, &c.** — (see ch. 15. 29; 16. 3-12). Jezebel, though included among the members of Ahab's house, has her ignominious fate expressly foretold (see 2 Kings, 9. 30). 27-29. **Ahab rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly** — He was not obdurate, like Jezebel. This terrible announcement made a deep impression on the king's heart, and led, for a while, to sincere repentance. Going softly, *i. e.*, barefoot, and with a pensive manner within doors. He manifested all the external signs, conventional and natural, of the

deepest sorrow. He was wretched ; and so great is the mercy of God, that, in consequence of his humiliation, the threatened punishment was deferred.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**1-36. AHAB SLAIN AT RAMOTH-GILEAD.** 1. **They continued three years without war between Syria and Israel**—The disastrous defeat of Ben-hadad had so destroyed his army and exhausted the resources of his country, that, however willing, he was unable to recommence active hostilities against Israel. But that his hereditary enmity remained unsubdued, was manifested by his breach of faith concerning the treaty by which he had engaged to restore all the cities which his father had seized (ch. 20. 34). 2. **Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel**—It was singular that a friendly league between the sovereigns of Israel and Judah should, for the first time, have been formed by princes of such opposite characters—the one pious—the other wicked. Neither this league, nor the matrimonial alliance by which the union of the royal families was more closely cemented, met the Lord's approval (2 Chronicles, 19. 2). It led, however, to a visit by Jehoshaphat, whose reception in Samaria was distinguished by the most splendid hospitality (2 Chronicles, 18. 2). The opportunity of this visit was taken advantage of, to push an object on which Ahab's heart was much set. 3. **Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours**—A Levitical and free town on the north border of Gad (Deuteronomy, 4. 43 ; Joshua, 21. 38), on the site of the present Salt Lake, in the province of Belka. It lay within the territories of the Israelitish monarch, and was unjustly alienated ; but whether it was one of the cities usurped by the first Ben-hadad, which his son had promised to restore, or was retained for some other reasons, the sacred historian has not mentioned. In the expedition which Ahab meditated for the recovery of this town, the aid of Jehoshaphat was asked, and promised (see 2 Chronicles, 18. 3). Previous to declaring hostilities, it was customary to consult the prophets (see 1 Samuel, 28) ; and Jehoshaphat having expressed a strong desire to know the Lord's will concerning this war, Ahab assembled 400 of his prophets. These could not be either the prophets of Baal, nor of Asherah (18. 19), but seem (*v.* 12) to have been false prophets, who conformed to the symbolic calf-worship of Jehovah. Being the creatures of Ahab they unanimously predicted a prosperous issue to the war. But dissatisfied with them, Jehoshaphat inquired if there was any true prophet of the Lord. Ahab agreed, with great reluctance, to allow Micaiah to be summoned. He was the only true prophet then to be found residing in Samaria, and he had to be brought out of prison (*v.* 26) into which, according to Josephus, he had been cast, on account of his rebuke to Ahab for sparing the king of Syria. 10. **A void place**—*lit.*, a thrashing floor, formed at the gate of Samaria. 11. **Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron**—Small projections, of the size and form of our candle extinguishers (worn in many parts of

the East as military ornaments), were worn by the Syrians of that time, and probably by the Israelite warriors also. Zedekiah, by assuming two horns, personated two heroes; and, pretending to be a prophet, wished in this manner to represent the kings of Israel and Judah in a military triumph. It was a symbolic action, to impart greater force to his language (see Deuteronomy, 33. 17); but it was little more than a flourish with a *spontoon*. [CALMET'S FRAGMENT.] 14. **What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak**—On the way, the messenger who conducted him to the royal presence, informed him of the tenor of the prophecies already given, and recommended him to agree with the rest, no doubt, from the kindly motive of seeing him released from imprisonment. But Micaiah, inflexibly faithful to his Divine mission as a prophet, announced his purpose to proclaim honestly whatever God should bid him. On being asked by the king, "Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I forbear?" the prophet gave precisely the same answer as the previous oracles that had been consulted; but it must have been given in a sarcastic tone, and in ironical mockery of their way of speaking. Being solemnly urged to give a serious and truthful answer, Micaiah then declared the visionary scene the Spirit had revealed to him—"I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd"—the purport of this was, that the army of Israel would be defeated and dispersed—that Ahab would fall in the battle, and the people return without either being pursued or destroyed by the enemy. 18-23. **Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?**—Since Ahab was disposed to trace this unwelcome truth to personal enmity, Micaiah proceeded, fearlessly, to tell the incensed monarch, in full detail, what had been revealed to him. The Hebrew prophets, borrowing their symbolic pictures from earthly scenes, described God in heaven as a king in his kingdom. And as earthly princes do nothing of importance without asking the advice of their counselors, God is represented as consulting about the fate of Ahab. This prophetic language must not be interpreted literally, and the command must be viewed as only a permission to the lying spirit (Romans, II. 34). [CALMET.] 24, 25. **Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek**—The insolence of this man, the leader of the false prophets, seems to have been provoked by jealousy at Micaiah's assumed monopoly of the spirit of inspiration. This mode of smiting, usually with a shoe, is both severe and ignominious. The calm reply of the Lord's prophet consisted in announcing the fate of the false prophets who suffered as the advisers of the disastrous expedition. 26-28. **Take Micaiah, . . . Put this fellow in prison**—Ahab, under the impulse of a vehement resentment, remands the prophet until his return. **bread of affliction, water of affliction**—*i. e.*, the poorest prison fare. Micaiah submitted, but reiterated aloud, in the presence of all, that the issue of the war would be fatal to Ahab. 29-38. **went up to Ramoth-gilead**—The king of Israel, bent on this expedition, marched, accompanied by his ally, with all his forces, to the siege, but, on approaching the scene of action, his courage failed, and, hoping

to evade the force. Micaiah's prophecy by a secret stratagem, he assumed the uniform of a subaltern, while he advised Jehoshaphat to fight in his royal attire. The Syrian king, with a view either to put the speediest end to the war, or perhaps to wipe out the stain of his own humiliation (ch. 20. 31), had given special instructions to his generals to single out Ahab, and to take or kill him, as the author of the war. The officers at first directed their assault on Jehoshaphat, but, becoming aware of their mistake, desisted. Ahab was wounded by a random arrow, which, being probably poisoned, and the state of the weather increasing the virulence of the poison, he died at sunset. The corpse was conveyed to Samaria; and, as the chariot which brought it was being washed in a pool near the city, from the blood that had profusely oozed from the wound, the dogs, in conformity with Elijah's prophecy, came and licked it. — Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah.



PALM TREE.



# THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

COMMONLY CALLED

## THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

### CHAPTER I.

**I. MOAB REBELS. I. Then Moab rebelled**—Subdued by David (2 Samuel, 8. 2), they had, in the partition of Israel and Judah, fallen to the share of the former kingdom. But they took advantage of the death of Ahab to shake off the yoke (see ch. 3. 6). The casualty that befel Ahaziah prevented his taking active measures for suppressing this revolt—which was accomplished as a providential judgment on the house of Ahab, for all these crimes.

**2-8. AHAZIAH'S JUDGMENT BY ELIJAH. 2-8. Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber**—This lattice was either a *part* of the wooden parapet or fence which surrounds the flat roofs of houses, and over which the king was carelessly leaning, when it gave way; or, it might be an opening like a sky-light in the roof itself, done over with lattice-work, which, being slender or rotten, the king stepped on and slipped through. This latter supposition is, most probably, the true one, as Ahaziah did not fall either into the street or the court, but "his upper chamber." **inquire of Baal-zebub**—Anxious to learn whether he should recover from the effects of this severe fall, he sent to consult Baal-zebub; *i. e.*, the god of flies, who was considered the patron deity of medicine. A temple to that idol was erected at Ekron, which was resorted to far and wide, though it afterward led to the destruction of the place (Zechariah, 9. 5; Amos, 1. 8; Zephaniah, 2. 4). After visiting Ekron, "the god of flies," is a name that gives me no surprise. The flies there swarmed, in fact so innumerable, that I could hardly get any food without these troublesome insects getting into it. [VAN DE VELDE.] **3. the angel of the Lord**—Not *an* angel, but *the* angel, who carried on all communications between the invisible God and his chosen people. [HENGSTENBERG.] This angel commissioned Elijah to meet the king's messengers, to stop them peremptorily on the idolatrous errand, and convey, by them to the king, information of his approaching death. This consultation of an idol being a breach of the fundamental law of the kingdom (Exodus, 30. 3; Deuteronomy, 5. 7), was a daring and deliberate rejection of the national religion. The Lord, in making this announcement of his death, designed that he should see, in that event, a judgment for his idolatry. **3. Thou shalt not come down from that bed**—On being taken up, he had probably been laid on the divan—a raised frame, about three feet broad, extended along the sides of a room, covered with cushions and mattresses—serving, in short, as a sofa by day, and a bed by night—and ascended by steps. **Elijah departed**—To his ordinary abode, which was then at

Mount Carmel (ch. 2. 25 ; 1 Kings, 18. 42). 5. **the messengers turned back** — They did not know the stranger ; but his authoritative tone, commanding attitude, and affecting message, determined them at once to return. 8. **an hairy man** — This was the description, not of his person, as in the case of Esau, but of his dress, which consisted either of unwrought sheep or goat-skins (Hebrews, II. 37), or of camel's hair-cloth — the coarser manufacture of this material — like the rough hair-cloth we use as coverings for goods. The Dervishes and Bedouins are attired in this wild, uncouth manner ; while their hair flows loose on the head, their shaggy cloak is thrown over their shoulders, and tied in front on the breast, naked, except at the waist, round which is a skin girdle — a broad, rough leathern belt. Similar to this was the girdle of the prophets, as in keeping with their coarse garments, and their stern, uncompromising office.

9-16. ELIJAH BRINGS FIRE FROM HEAVEN ON AHAZIAH'S MESSENGERS. 9. **Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty** — Any appearance of cruelty that there is in the fate of the two captains and their men will be removed, on a full consideration of the circumstances. God being the king of Israel, Ahaziah was bound to govern the kingdom according to the Divine law ; to apprehend the Lord's prophet, for discharging a commanded duty, was that of an impious and notorious rebel. The captains abetted the king in his rebellion ; and they exceeded their military duty by contemptuous insults. **man of God** — In using this term, they either spoke derisively, believing him to be no true prophet ; or, if they regarded him as a true prophet, the summons to him to surrender himself bound to the king was a still more flagrant insult ; the language of the second captain being worse than that of the first. 10. **let fire come down** — Rather, "fire shall come down." Not to avenge a personal insult of Elijah, but an insult upon God in the person of His prophet ; and the punishment was inflicted, not by the prophet, but by the direct hand of God. 15. **he arose, and went down with him** — A marvelous instance of faith and obedience. Though he well knew how obnoxious his presence was to the king, yet, on receiving God's command, he goes unhesitatingly, and repeats, with his own lips, the unwelcome tidings conveyed by the messengers.

17, 18. AHAZIAH DIES, AND IS SUCCEEDED BY JEHORAM. 17. **Jehoram** — The brother of Ahaziah (see ch. 3. 1).

## CHAPTER II.

1-10. ELIJAH DIVIDES JORDAN. 1. **When the Lord would take up Elijah** — A revelation of this event had been made to the prophet ; but, unknown to him, it had also been revealed to his disciples, and to Elisha in particular, who kept constantly beside him. **Gilgal** — This Gilgal (Jiljil) was near Ebal and Gerizim — a school of the prophets was established there. At Bethel there was also a school of the prophets, which Elijah had founded, notwithstanding that place was the head-quarters of the calf-wor-

ship, and at Jericho there was another. In traveling to these places, which he had done through the impulse of the Spirit (v. 2. 4-6), Elijah wished to pay a farewell visit to these several institutions, which lay on his way to the place of ascension; and, at the same time, from a feeling of humility and modesty, to be in solitude, where there would be no eye-witnesses of his glorification. All his efforts, however, to prevail on his attendant to remain behind were fruitless. Elisha knew that the time was at hand, and at every place the sons of the prophets spoke to him of the approaching removal of his master. Their last stage was at the Jordan, in going to which they were followed at a distance by fifty scholars of the prophets, from Jericho, who were desirous, in honour of the great occasion, to witness the miraculous translation of the prophet. The revelation of this striking event to so many was a necessary part of the dispensation: for it was designed to be under the law, like that of Enoch in the patriarchal age, a visible proof of another state, and a type of the resurrection of Christ. 3. **Take away thy master from thy head**—An allusion to the custom of scholars sitting at the feet of their master—the latter being over their heads (Acts, 22. 3). 8. **Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters**—Like the rod of Moses, it had the Divinely operating power of the Spirit. 9. **Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee**—Trusting either that it would be in his power to bequeath it, or that God, at his entreaty, would grant it. **let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me**—This request was not, as is commonly supposed, for the power of working miracles exceeding the magnitude and number of his master's, nor does it mean a higher endowment of the prophetic spirit; for Elisha was neither superior to, nor perhaps equally great with, his predecessor. But the phrase, "a double portion," was applied to the first-born, and therefore Elisha's request was, simply, to be heir to the prophetic office and gifts of his master. 10. **Thou has asked a hard thing**—An extraordinary blessing which *I* cannot, and God only, can give. Nevertheless he, doubtless by the secret directions of the Spirit, proposed to Elisha a sign, the observation of which would keep him in the attitude of an anxious waiter, as well as suppliant for the favour.

#### 11-18. HE IS TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN IN A CHARIOT OF FIRE.

11. **behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire**—Some bright effulgence, which, in the eyes of the spectators, resembled those objects. **went up by a whirlwind**—A tempest or storm—wind accompanied with vivid flashes of fire, figuratively used for the Divine judgments (Isaiah, 29. 6). 12. **Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father**—*i. e.*, spiritual father, as the pupils of the prophets are called their sons. **the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof**—*i. e.*, that as earthly kingdoms are dependent for their defense and glory upon warlike preparations, there a single prophet had done more for the preservation and prosperity of Israel than all her chariots and horsemen. **took hold of his own clothes and rent them**—In token of his grief for his loss. 13. **He took up also the mantle of Elijah**—The transference of

this prophetic cloak was, to himself, a pledge of his being appointed successor, and it was an outward token to others of the spirit of Elijah resting upon him. 14-18. **smote the waters**—The waving of the mantle on the river, and the miraculous division of the waters consequent upon it, was an evidence that the Lord God of Elijah was with him, and as this miracle was witnessed by the scholars of the prophets from Jericho, they forthwith recognized the pre-eminence of Elijah, as now the prophet of Israel. 16-18. **fifty strong men, let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master**—Though the young prophets from Jericho had seen Elijah's miraculous passage of the Jordan, they had not witnessed the ascension. They imagined that he might have been cast by the whirlwind on some mountain or valley; or, if he had actually been admitted into heaven, they expected that his body would still be remaining somewhere on earth. In compliance with their importunity, he gave them permission, but told them what the result would be.

19-25. ELISHA HEALS THE WATERS. 20. **Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein**—The noxious qualities of the water could not be corrected by the infusion of salt—for, supposing the salt was possessed of such a property, a whole spring could not be purified by a dishful for a day, much less in all future time. The pouring in of the salt was a symbolic act with which Elisha accompanied the word of the Lord, by which the spring was healed. [KEIL.] 23, 24. **there came forth little children**—*i. e.* the idolatrous, or infidel young men of the place, who affected to disbelieve the report of his master's translation, sarcastically urged him to follow in the glorious career. **bald-head**—An epithet of contempt in the East, applied to a person even with a bushy head of hair. The appalling judgment that befel them was God's interference to uphold His newly invested prophet.

### CHAPTER III.

1-3. JEHORAM'S EVIL REIGN OVER ISRAEL. 1. **Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat**—(Cf. 1 Kings, 22. 51). To reconcile the statements in the two passages, we must suppose that Ahaziah, having reigned during the seventeenth and greater part of the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat—was succeeded by his brother Joram or Jehoram, in the end of that eighteenth year, or else that Ahaziah, having reigned two years in conjunction with his father, died at the end of that period, when Jehoram ascended the throne. His policy was as hostile as that of his predecessors to the true religion; but he made some changes. Whatever was his motive for this alteration—whether dread of the many alarming judgments the patronage of idolatry had brought upon his father; or whether it was made as a small concession to the feelings of Jehoshaphat, his ally, he abolished idolatry in its gross form, and restored the symbolic worship of God, which the kings of Israel

from the time of Jeroboam, had set up as a partition wall between their subjects and those of Judah.

**4, 5. MESHU, KING OF MOAB, REBELS.** 4-6. **Mesha, king of Moab, &c.**—His dominions embracing an extensive pasture country, he paid, as annual tribute, the wool of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams. It is still common in the East to pay custom and taxes in the fruits or natural produce of the land. **5. King of Moab rebelled**—This is a repetition of chapter I. 1, in order to introduce an account of the confederate expedition for crushing this revolt, which had been allowed to continue unchecked during the short reign of Ahaziah.

**6-24. ELISHA PROMISES WATER AND VICTORY OVER MOAB.**

**6. King Jehoram . . . numbered Israel**—Made a levy from his own subjects, and at the same time sought an alliance with Jehoshaphat, which, as on the former occasion with Ahab, was readily promised (1 Kings, 22. 4). **8, 9. Which way shall we go? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom**—This was a long and circuitous route, by the southern bend of the Dead Sea. Jehoshaphat, however, preferred it, partly because the part of the Moabite territory at which they would arrive was the most defenseless, and partly because he would thereby enlist, in the expedition, the forces of the king of Edom. But in penetrating the deep, rocky valley of Ahsy, which forms the boundary between Edom and Moab, the confederate army were reduced, both man and beast, to the greatest extremities for want of water. They were disappointed by finding the Wady of this valley, the brook Zered (Deuteronomy, 2. 13-18) [ROBINSON], dry. Jehoram was in despair. But the pious mind of Jehoshaphat inquired for a prophet of the Lord; and, on being informed that Elisha was at hand, "the three kings went down to him," *i. e.*, to his tent, which was either in the camp or close by it. He had been directed thither by the Spirit of God for this special purpose. They went to him, not only as a mark of respect, but to supplicate for his assistance, and knowing his stern temper. **11. Which poured water on the hands of Elijah**—*i. e.*, was his servant—this being one of the common offices of a servant. The phrase is used here as synonymous with "a true and eminent prophet," who will reveal God's will to us. **13. What have I to do with thee, &c.**—Wishing to produce a deep spirit of humility and contrition, Elisha gave a stern repulse to the king of Israel, accompanied by a sarcastic sneer, in bidding him go and consult Baal and his soothsayers. But the distressed condition, especially the imploring language, of the royal suppliants, who acknowledged the hand of the Lord in this distress, drew from the prophet the solemn assurance, that solely out of respect to Jehoshaphat, the Lord's true servant, did he take any interest in Jehoram. **15. bring me a minstrel**—The effect of music in soothing the mind is much regarded in the East; and it appears that the ancient prophets, before entering on their work, commonly resorted to it, as a preparative, by praise and prayer, to their receiving the prophetic afflatus. **the hand of the Lord**—A phrase significantly implying that the gift of prophecy was not a natural or inherent gift, but conferred by the power and grace of

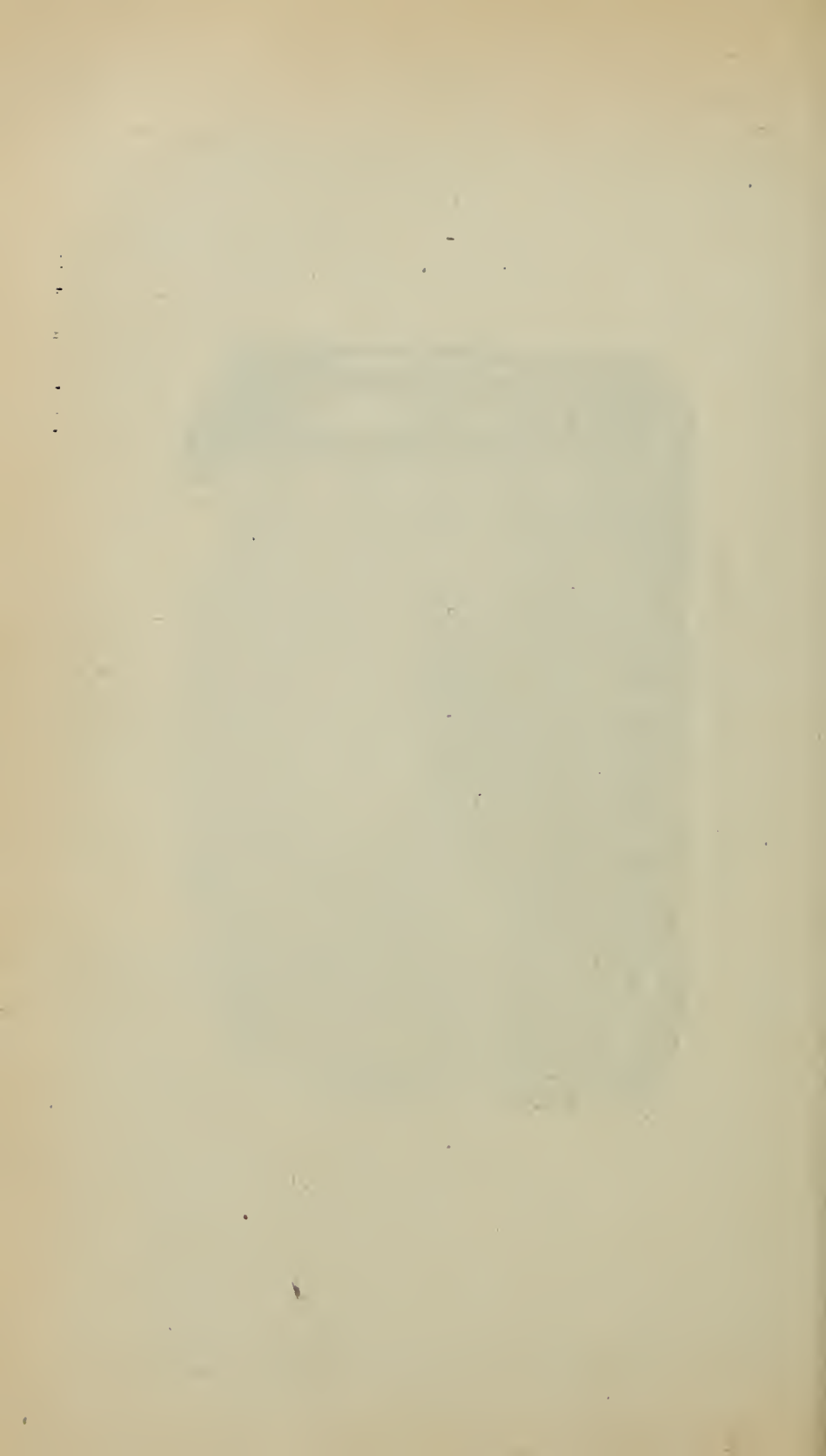
God. 16. **Make this valley full of ditches**—Capable of holding water. 17. **Ye shall not see wind**—It is common in the East to speak of *seeing* wind, from the clouds of straw, dust or sand, that are often whirled into the air, after a long drought. 20. **when the meat offering was offered**—*i. e.*, at the time of the morning sacrifice, accompanied, doubtless, with solemn prayers; and these led, it may be, by Elisha on this occasion, as on a similar one by Elijah (1 Kings, 18. 36). **behold, there came water by the way of Edom**—Far from the Israelitish camp, in the eastern mountains of Edom, a great fall of rain—a kind of cloud-burst took place, by which the Wady was at once filled, without their either seeing the wind or the rains. The Divine interposition was shown by introducing the laws of nature to the determined end in the pre-determined way. [KEIL.] It brought not only aid to the Israelitish army in their distress, by a plentiful supply of water, but destruction on the Moabites, who, perceiving the water, under the refulgent rays of the morning sun, red like blood, concluded the confederate kings had quarreled and deluged the field with their mutual slaughter; so that, rushing to their camp in full expectation of great spoil, they were met by the Israelites, who, prepared for battle, fought, and pursued them. Their country was laid waste in the way, which has always been considered the greatest desolation in the East (*v.* 24). 25. **Kir-hareseth**—(now Kerak)—Castle of Moab—then, probably, the only fortress in the land. 27. **took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt-offering, &c.**—By this deed of horror, to which the allied army drove the king of Moab, a Divine judgment came upon Israel; that is, the besiegers feared the anger of God, which they had incurred by giving occasion to the human sacrifice forbidden in the law (Leviticus, 18. 21; 20. 3), and hastily raised the siege.

## CHAPTER IV.

17. **ELISHA AUGMENTS THE WIDOW'S OIL.** 1. **there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets**—They were allowed to marry as well as the priests and Levites. Her husband, not enjoying the lucrative profits of business, had nothing but a professional income, which, in that irreligious age, would be precarious and very scanty, so that he was not in a condition to provide for his family. **the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen**—By the enactments of the law, a creditor was entitled to claim the person and children of the insolvent debtor, and compel them to serve him as bondmen, till the year of jubilee should set him free. 2. **a pot**—Or cruet of oil. This comprising her whole stock of domestic utensils, he directs her to borrow empty vessels not a few; then, secluding herself with her children, she was to pour oil from her cruse into the borrowed vessels, and, selling the oil, discharge the debt, and then maintain herself and family with the remainder. 6. **the oil stayed**—*i. e.*, ceased to multiply, the benevolent object for which the miracle had been wrought having been accomplished.



Ruins of Tadmor, or Palmyra.





**8-17. PROMISES A SON TO THE SHUNAMITE.** 8. **Elisha passed to Shunem**—Now, Sulam, in the plain of Esdraelon, at the south-western base of Little Hermon. The prophet, in his journey, was often entertained here by one of its pious and opulent inhabitants. 10. **Let us make a little chamber**—Not build, but prepare it. She meant a room in the *oleah*, the porch or gateway (2 Samuel, 18. 33; 1 Kings, 17. 19), attached to the front of the house, leading into the court and inner apartments. The front of the house, excepting the door, is a dead wall, and hence this room is called a chamber in the wall. It was usually appropriated to the use of strangers, or lodgers for a night, and, from its seclusion, convenient for study and retirement. 13. **What is to be done for thee?**—Wishing to testify his gratitude for the hospitable attentions of this family, he announced to her the birth of a son “about this time next year.” The interest and importance of such an intelligence can only be estimated by considering that Oriental women, and Jewish in particular, connect ideas of disgrace with barrenness, and cherish a more ardent desire for children than women in any other part of the world. (Genesis, 18. 10-15).

**18-37. RAISES HER DEAD SON.** 19. **My head! my head!**—The cries of the boy, the part affected, and the season of the year, make it probable that he had been overtaken by a stroke of the sun. Pain, stupor and inflammatory fever are the symptoms of the disease, which is often fatal. 22. **she called unto her husband**—Her heroic concealment of the death from her husband is not the least interesting feature of the story. 24. **Drive, and go forward**—It is usual for women to ride on asses, accompanied by a servant, who walks behind and drives the beast with his stick, goading the animal at the speed required by his mistress. The Shunamite had to ride a journey of five or six hours to the top of Carmel. 26. **And she answered, It is well**—Her answer was purposely brief and vague to Gehazi, for she reserved a full disclosure of her loss for the ear of the prophet himself. She had met Gehazi at the foot of the hill, and she stopped not in her ascent till she had disburdened her heavy-laden spirit at Elisha's feet. The violent paroxysm of grief into which she fell on approaching him, appeared to Gehazi an act of disrespect to his master; he was preparing to remove her when the prophet's observant eye perceived that she was overwhelmed with some unknown cause of distress. How great is a mother's love! how wondrous are the works of Providence! The Shunamite had not sought a son from the prophet—her child was, in every respect, the free gift of God. Was she then allowed to rejoice in the possession for a little, only to be pierced with sorrow by seeing the corpse of the cherished boy? Perish, doubt and unbelief! This event happened that “the works of God should be made manifest” in his prophet, “and for the glory of God.” 29 **take my staff and lay . . . on the face of the child**—The staff was probably an official rod of a certain form and size. Necromancers used to send their staff with orders to the messengers to let it come in contact with nothing by the way that might dissipate or destroy the virtue imparted to it. Some have thought that Elisha himself entertained sim-

ilar ideas, and was under an impression that the actual application of his staff would serve as well as the touch of his hand. But this is an imputation dishonourable to the character of the prophet. He wished to teach the Shunamite, who obviously placed too great dependence upon him, a memorable lesson, to look to God. By sending his servant forward to lay his staff on the child, he raised her expectations, but, at the same time, taught her that his own help was unavailing — “there was neither voice nor hearing.” The command, “to salute no man by the way,” showed the urgency of the mission, not simply as requiring the avoidance of the tedious and unnecessary greetings so common in the East (Luke, 10. 1), but the exercise of faith and prayer. The act of Gehazi was allowed to fail, in order to free the Shunamite, and the people of Israel at large, of the superstitious notion of supposing a miraculous virtue resided in any *person*, or in any *rod*, and that it was only through earnest prayer and faith in the power of God and for His glory, that this and every miracle was to be performed.

**34. lay upon the child, &c.**—(see 1 Kings, 17. 21; Acts, 20. 10.) Although this contact with a dead body would communicate ceremonial uncleanness, yet, in performing the great moral duties of piety and benevolence, positive laws were sometimes dispensed with, particularly by the prophets. **35. the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes**—These were the first acts of restored respiration, and they are ascribed as successive steps. Miracles were, for the most part, performed instantaneously; but sometimes, also, they were advanced progressively toward completion (1 Kings, 18. 44, 45; Mark, 8. 24, 25).

**38-41. HEALS DEADLY POTTAGE.** **38. there was a dearth in the land**—See ch. 8. 1. **the sons of the prophets were sitting before him**—When receiving instruction, the scholars sat under their masters. This refers to their being domiciled under the same roof (Cf. ch. 6. 1). **set on the great pot**—As it is most likely that the Jewish would resemble the Egyptian “great pot,” it is seen by the monumental painting to have been a large goblet with two long legs, which stood over the fire on the floor. The seethed pottage consisted of meat cut into small pieces, mixed with rice or meal and vegetables. **39. went into the field to gather herbs**—Wild herbs are very extensively used by people in the East, even by those who possess kitchen-gardens. The fields are daily searched for mallow, asparagus, and other wild plants. **wild vine**—*lit.*, “vine of the field,” supposed to be the *colocynth*, a cucumber, which, in its leaves, tendrils and fruit, bears a strong resemblance to the wild vine. The “gourds,” or fruit, are of the colour and size of an orange, bitter to the taste, causing colic, and exciting to the nerves; largely eaten, they would occasion such a derangement of the stomach and bowels as to be followed by death. The meal which Elisha poured into the pot was a symbolic sign that the noxious quality of the herbs was removed. **lap-full**—The hyke, or large cloak or plaid, is thrown loosely over the left shoulder, and fastened under the right arm, so as to form a lap or apron.

**42-44. SATISFIES A HUNDRED MEN WITH TWENTY LOAVES.** **43. they shall eat, and shall leave thereof**—This was not a miracle of

Elisha, but only a prediction of one by the word of the Lord, and thus it differed widely from those of Christ (Matthew, 15. 37; Mark, 8. 8; Luke, 9. 17; John, 6. 12).

## CHAPTER V:

**1-7. NAAMAN'S LEPROSY.** 1. **Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master**—Highly esteemed for his military character and success. **and honourable**—Rather, "very rich." **but he was a leper**—This leprosy, which, in Israel, would have excluded him from society, did not affect his free intercourse in the court of Syria. 2. **a little maid**—Who had been captured in one of the many predatory incursions which were then made by the Syrians on the northern border of Israel (see 1 Samuel, 30. 8; ch. 13. 21; 24. 2). By this young Hebrew slave of his wife, Naaman's attention was directed to the prophet of Israel, as the person who would remove his leprosy. Naaman, on communicating the matter to his royal master, was immediately furnished with a letter to the king of Israel, and set out for Samaria, carrying with him, as an indispensable preliminary in the East, very costly presents. 5. **ten talents of silver**—£3,421; 6,000 shekels of gold; a large sum, of uncertain value. **ten changes of raiment**—Splendid dresses, for festive occasions—the honour being thought to consist not only in the beauty and fineness of the material, but on having a variety to put on after another, in the same night. 7. **when the king of Israel had read the letter, he rent his clothes**—According to an ancient practice among the Eastern people, the main object only was stated in the letter that was carried by the party concerned, while other circumstances were left to be explained at the interview. This explains Jehoram's burst of emotions—not horror at supposed blasphemy, but alarm and suspicion that this was merely made an occasion for a quarrel. Such a prince as he was would not readily think of Elisha, or, perhaps, have heard of his miraculous deeds.

**8-14. ELISHA SENDS HIM TO JORDAN, AND HE IS HEALED.** 8. **When Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying . . . let him come to me**—This was the grand and ultimate object to which, in the providence of God, the journey of Naaman was subservient. On the Syrian general, with his imposing retinue, arriving at the prophet's house, Elisha sent him a message to "go and wash in Jordan seven times." This apparently rude reception to a foreigner of so high dignity, incensed Naaman to such a degree, that he resolved to depart, scornfully boasting that "the rivers of Damascus were better than all the waters of Israel." 11. **strike his hand over the place**—*i. e.*, wave it over the diseased parts of his body. It was anciently, and still continues to be, a very prevalent superstition in the East, that the hand of a king, or person of great reputed sanctity, touching or waved over a sore, will heal it. 12. **Abana and Pharpar**—The Barrady and one of its five tributaries—uncertain which. The waters of Damascus are still as

highly extolled by their inhabitants for their purity and coldness. 14. **Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan** — Persuaded by his calmer and more reflecting attendants to try a method so simple and easy, he followed their instructions, and was cured. The cure was performed on the basis of God's covenant with Israel, by which the land, and all pertaining to it was blessed. Seven was the symbol of the covenant. [KEIL.]

15-19. ELISHA REFUSES NAAMAN'S GIFTS. 15. **he returned to the man of God** — After the miraculous cure, Naaman returned to Elisha, to whom he acknowledged his full belief in the sole supremacy of the God of Israel, and offered him a liberal reward. But to show that he was not actuated by the mercenary motives of the heathen priests and prophets, Elisha, though he accepted presents on other occasions (ch. 4. 42), respectfully but firmly declined them on this, being desirous that the Syrians should see the piety of God's servants, and their superiority to all worldly and selfish motives in promoting the honour of God and the interests of true religion. 17. **two mules' burden of earth** — With which to make an altar (Exodus, 20. 24) to the God of Israel. What was his motive or his purpose in this proposal; whether he thought that God could be acceptably worshipped only on his own *soil*, or he wished, when far away from the Jordan, to have the *earth* of Palestine to rub himself with, which the Orientals use a substitute for water; and whether by making such a request of Elisha, he thought the prophet's grant of it would impart some virtue; or, whether, like the modern Jews and Mahommedans, he resolved to have a portion of this *holy earth* for his nightly pillow, it is not easy to say. It is not strange to find such notions in so newly a converted heathen. 18. **goeth into the house of Rimmon** — A Syrian deity; probably the sun, or the planetary system, of which a pomegranate (*Heb.*, Rimmon) was the symbol. **leaneth on my hand** — *i. e.*, meaning the service which Naaman rendered as the attendant of his sovereign. Elisha's prophetic commission not extending to any but the conversion of Israel from idolatry, he makes no remark either approving or disapproving, on the declared course of Naaman, but simply gives (*v.* 19) the parting benediction.

20-27. GEHAZI, BY A LIE, OBTAINS A PRESENT, BUT IS SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY. 20. **I will run after him, and take somewhat of him** — The respectful courtesy to Elisha, shown in the person of his servant, and the open-handed liberality of his gifts, attest the fullness of Naaman's gratitude; while the lie — the artful management in dismissing the bearers of the treasure, and the deceitful appearance before his master, as if he had not left the house, give a most unfavourable impression of Gehazi's character. 23. **In two bags** — People in the East, when traveling, have their money, in certain sums, put up in bags. 27. **Leper as white as snow** — (see Leviticus, 13. 3). This heavy infliction was not too severe for the crime of Gehazi. For it was not the covetousness alone that was punished; but, at the same time, the ill use made of the prophet's name to gain an object prompted by a mean covetousness, and the attempt to conceal it by lying. [KEIL.]

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-7. ELISHA CAUSES IRON TO SWIM.** 1. **The place where we dwell with thee**—*Marg.*, "sit before thee." The one points to a common residence—the other to a common place of meeting. The tenor of the narrative shows the humble condition of Elisha's pupils. The place was either Beth-el or Jericho—probably the latter. The ministry and miracles of Elisha brought great accessions to his schools. 2. **Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan**—Whose wooded banks would furnish plenty of timber. 5. **It was borrowed**—*lit.*, begged. The scholar's distress arose from the consideration that it had been presented to him; and that, owing to his poverty, he could not procure another. 6. **Cut down a stick, and cast it in thither**—Although this means was used, it had no natural adaptation to make the iron swim. Besides, the Jordan is at Jericho so deep and rapid, that there was 1000 chances to 1 against the stick falling into the hole of the axe-head. All attempts to account for the recovery of the lost implement on such a theory must be rejected. "The iron did swim"—only by the miraculous exertion of Elisha's power.

**8-17. DISCLOSES THE KING OF SYRIA'S COUNSEL.** 8. **the king of Syria warred against Israel**—This seems to have been a sort of guerilla warfare, carried on by predatory inroads on different parts of the country. Elisha apprized king Jehoram of the secret purposes of the enemy; so, by adopting precautionary measures, he was always enabled to anticipate and defeat their attacks. The frequency of his disappointments having led the Syrian king to suspect some of his servants of carrying on a treacherous correspondence with the enemy, he was informed about Elisha, whose apprehension he forthwith determined to effect. This resolution was, of course, grounded on the belief, that however great the knowledge of Elisha might be, if seized and kept a prisoner, he could no longer give information to the king of Israel. 13. **Dothan**—Or Dothaim; a little north of Samaria (see Genesis, 37. 17). 15. **his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?**—On the Syrian detachment surrounding the place by night, for the apprehension of the prophet, his servant was paralyzed with fear. This was a new servant, who had only been with him since Gehazi's dismissal, and, consequently, had little or no experience of his master's powers. His faith was easily shaken by so unexpected an alarm. 17. **Elisha prayed, and said, O Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see**—The invisible guard of angels that encompass and defend us (Psalm 34. 7). The opening of the eyes, which Elisha prayed for, were those of the Spirit, not of the body—the eye of faith sees the reality of the Divine presence and protection where all is vacancy or darkness to the ordinary eye. The horses and chariots were symbols of the Divine power (see ch. 2. 12); and their fiery nature denoted their supernatural origin; for fire, the most ethereal of earthly elements, is the most appropriate symbol of Godhead. [KEIL.]

**18-23. HIS ARMY SMITTEN WITH BLINDNESS.** 18. **Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness**—Not a total and material blindness, for then they could not have followed him—but a mental hallucination (see Genesis, 19. 11), that they did not perceive or recognize him to be the object of their search. 19. **this is not the way, neither is this the city**—This statement is so far true, that, as he had now left the place of his residence, they would not have got him by that road. But the ambiguity of his language was purposely framed to deceive them; and yet the deception must be viewed in the light of a stratagem, which has always been deemed lawful in war. **he led them into Samaria**—When they were arrived in the midst of the capital, their eyes, at Elisha's request, were opened, and they then became aware of their defenseless condition, for Jehoram had received private premonition of their arrival. The king, so far from being allowed to slay the enemies who were thus unconsciously put in his power, was recommended to entertain them with liberal hospitality, and then dismiss them to their own country. This was a humane advice; it was contrary to the usage of war to put war captives to death in cold blood, even when taken by the point of the sword, much more those whom the miraculous power and providence of God had unexpectedly placed at his disposal. In such circumstances, kind and hospitable treatment was every way more becoming in itself, and would be productive of the best effects. It would rebound to the credit of the true religion, which inspired such an excellent spirit into its professors; and it would not only prevent the future opposition of the Syrians, but make them stand in awe of a people who, they had seen, was so remarkably protected by a prophet of the Lord. The latter clause of verse 23, shows that these salutary effects were fully realized. A moral conquest had been gained over the Syrians.

**24-33. BEN-HADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA.** **Ben-hadad besieged Samaria**—This was the predicted accomplishment of the result of Ahab's foolish and misplaced kindness (1 Kings, 20. 42). 25. **an ass' head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver**—Though the ass was deemed unclean food, necessity might warrant their violation of a positive law when mothers, in their extremity, were found violating the law of nature. The head was the worst part of the animal. Eighty pieces of silver, equal to £5 5s. **the fourth part of a cab**—A cab was the smallest dry measure. The proportion here stated was nearly half a pint for 12s. 6d. "Dove's dung" is thought by BOCHART to be a kind of pulse or pea, common in Judea, and still kept in the store-houses of Cairo and Damascus, and other places, for the use of it by pilgrim caravans; by Linnæus, and other botanists, it is said to be the root or white bulb of the plant *Ornithogalum umbellatum*, Star of Bethlehem. The sacred historian does not say that the articles here named were not regularly sold at the rates described, but only that instances were known of such high prices being given. 26. **as the king was passing**—To look at the defenses, or to give some necessary orders for manning the walls. 29. **we boiled my son, and did eat him**—See Deuteronomy, 28. 53. 30. **had sackcloth**

**within upon his flesh** — The horrid recital of this domestic tragedy led the king soon after to rend his garment, in consequence of which it was discovered that he wore a penitential shirt of hair-cloth. It is more than doubtful, however, if he was truly humbled on account of his own and the nation's sins, otherwise he would not have vowed vengeance on the prophet's life. The true explanation seems to be, that Elisha having counseled him not to surrender, with the promise, on condition of deep humiliation, of being delivered, and he having assumed the signs of contrition without receiving the expected relief, regarded Elisha who had proved false and faithless as the cause of all the protracted distress. 32. **But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him** — The latter clause of *v.* 33, which contains the king's impatient exclamation, enables us to account for the impetuous order he issued for the beheading of Elisha. Though Jehoram was a wicked king, and most of his courtiers would resemble their master, many had been won over, through the prophet's influence, to the true religion. A meeting, probably a prayer-meeting, of those was held in the house where he lodged, for he had none of his own (1 Kings, 19. 20, 21); and them he not only apprised of the king's design against himself, but disclosed to them the proof of a premeditated deliverance.

## CHAPTER VII.

## 1-16. ELISHA PROPHECIES INCREDIBLE PLENTY IN SAMARIA.

1. **Hear ye the word of the Lord** — This prediction, though uttered first to the assembled elders, was intimated to the king's messengers, who reported it to Jehoram (*v.* 18). **To-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, &c.** — This may be estimated at a peck of fine flour for 2s. 6d., and two pecks of barley at the same price. **at the gate of Samaria** — Vegetables, cattle, all sorts of country produce, are still sold every morning at the gates of towns in the East. 2. **A lord on whose hand the king leaned** — When an Eastern king walks, or stands abroad in the open air, he always supports himself on the arm of the *highest* courtier present. **if the Lord would make windows in heaven** — The scoffing infidelity of his remark, which was a sneer against not the prophet only, but the God he served, was justly and signally punished (see *v.* 20). 3. **There were four leprous men** — The account of the sudden raising of the siege, and the unexpected supply given to the famishing inhabitants of Samaria, is introduced by a narrative of the visit and discovery, by these poor creatures, of the extraordinary flight of the Syrians. **leprous men at the entering of the gate** — Living, perhaps, in some lazaret-house there (Leviticus, 13. 4-6; Numbers, 5. 3). 5. **They rose up in the twilight** — *i. e.*, the evening twilight (*v.* 12). **the uttermost part of the camp of Syria** — *i. e.*, the extremity nearest the city. 6, 7. **The Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots** — This illusion of the sense of hearing, whereby the besiegers imagined the tramp of two armies from opposite quar-

ters, was a great miracle which God wrought directly for the deliverance of His people. 8-11. **These lepers . . . did eat and drink**—After they had appeased their hunger, and secreted as many valuables as they could carry, their consciences smote them for concealing the discovery, and they hastened to publish it in the city. 10. **Horses tied, asses tied, and the tents as they were**—The uniform arrangement of encampments in the East is to place the tents in the center, while the cattle are picketed all around, as an outer wall of defense; and hence the lepers describe the cattle as the first objects they saw. 12-15. **The king . . . said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done**—Similar stratagems have been so often resorted to in the ancient and modern wars of the East, that there is no wonder Jehoram's suspicions were awakened. But the scouts whom he dispatched soon found unmistakable signs of the panic that had struck the enemy, and led to a most precipitate flight.

17-20. **THE UNBELIEVING LORD TRODDEN TO DEATH.** 17. **The king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned, &c.**—The news spreading like lightning through the city, and was followed, as was natural, by a popular rush to the Syrian camp. To keep order at the gate, the king ordered his minister to keep guard; but the impetuosity of the famishing people could not be resisted. The lord was trodden to death, and Elisha's prophecy, in all respects, accomplished.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1-6. **THE SHUNAMITE'S LAND RESTORED.** 1. **Then spake Elisha unto the woman**—Rather "had spoken." The repetition of Elisha's direction to the Shunamite is merely given as an introduction to the following narrative; and it probably took place before the events recorded in chapters 5 and 6. **the Lord hath called for a famine**—All such calamities are chastisements inflicted by the hand of God; and this famine was to be of double duration to that one which happened in the time of Elijah (James, 5. 17),—a just increase of severity, since the Israelites still continued obdurate and incorrigible, under the ministry and miracles of Elisha (Leviticus, 26. 21, 24, 28). 2. **she sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years**—Their territory was recommended to her, from its contiguity to her usual residence; and now, that this state had been so greatly reduced, there was less risk than formerly from the seductions of idolatry; and many of the Jews and Israelites were residing there. Besides, an emigration thither was less offensive to the king of Israel, than going to sojourn in Judah. 3. **she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land**—In consequence of her long continued absence from the country, her possessions were occupied by her kindred, or had been confiscated to the crown. No statute in the law of Moses ordained that alienation. But the innovation seems to have been adopted in Israel. 4. **the king talked with Gehazi**—Ceremonial pollution being conveyed by contact alone there was



nothing to prevent a conference being held with this leper at a distance; and, although he was excluded from the *town* of Samaria, this reported conversation may have taken place at the gate, or in one of the royal gardens. The providence of God so ordained that king Jehoram had been led to inquire, with great interest, into the miraculous deeds of Elisha; and that the prophet's servant was in the act of relating the marvelous incident of the restoration of the Shunamite's son, when she made her appearance to prefer her request. The king was pleased to grant it, and a state officer was charged to afford her every facility in the recovery of her family possession out of the hands of the occupier.

**7-15. HAZAEL KILLS HIS MASTER, AND SUCCEEDS HIM.** 7. **Elisha came to Damascus**—Being directed thither by the Spirit of God, in pursuance of the mission formerly given to his master in Horeb (I Kings, 19. 15), to anoint Hazael king of Syria. On the arrival of the prophet being known, Ben-hadad, who was sick, sent to inquire the issue of his disease, and, according to the practice of the heathens in consulting their sooth-sayers, ordered a liberal present in remuneration of the service. 9. **forty camels' burden**—The present, consisting of the rarest and most valuable produce of the land, would be liberal and magnificent. But it must not be supposed it was actually so large as to require forty camels to carry it. The Orientals are fond of display, and would, ostentatiously, lay upon forty beasts what might very easily have been borne by four. **thy son Ben-hadad**—So called from the established usage of designating the prophet father. This was the same Syrian monarch who had formerly persecuted him (see ch. 6. 13, 14). 10. **Go, say, Thou mayest certainly recover**—There was no contradiction in this message. This part was properly the answer to Ben-hadad's inquiry. The second part was intended for Hazael, who, like an artful and ambitious courtier, reported only as much of the prophet's statement as suited his own views (Cf. v. 14.) 11. **he settled his countenance steadfastly upon him, until he was ashamed**—*i. e.*, Hazael. The steadfast, penetrating look of the prophet seemed to have convinced Hazael that his secret designs were known, and that the deep emotions of Elisha were justified by the horrible atrocities which, too common in ancient warfare, that successful usurper committed in Israel (ch. 10. 32; 13. 3, 4, 22). 15. **Took a thick cloth, &c.**—A coverlet. In the East, this article of bed furniture is generally a thick quilt of wool or cotton, so that, with its great weight, when steeped in water, it would be a fit instrument for accomplishing the murderous purpose, without leaving any marks of violence. But it has been supposed by many doubtful that Hazael purposely murdered the king. It is common for Eastern people to sleep with their faces covered with a mosquito net; and, in some cases of fever, they damp the bed-clothes. Hazael, aware of those chilling remedies being usually resorted to, might have, with an honest intention, spread a refreshing cover over him. The rapid occurrence of the king's death and immediate burial were favourable to his instant elevation to the throne.

**16-23. JEHORAM'S WICKED REIGN.** 16. **Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat . . . began to reign**—(see ch. 3. 1). His father resigned the throne to him two years before his death. 18. **daughter of Ahab**—Athaliah, through whose influence Jehoram introduced the worship of Baal and many other evils into the kingdom of Judah (see 2 Chronicles, 21. 2-20). This apostasy would have led to the total extinction of the royal family in that kingdom, had it not been for the Divine promise to David (2 Samuel, 7). A national chastisement, however, was inflicted on Judah by the revolt of Edom, which, being hitherto governed by a tributary ruler (ch. 3. 9; 1 Kings, 22. 47), erected the standard of independence (see 2 Chronicles, 21. 9).

**24. AHAZIAH SUCCEEDS HIM.** 24. **Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead**—(See 2 Chronicles, 22. 1-6).

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-23. JEHU IS ANOINTED.** 1. **Ramoth-gilead**—A city of great importance to the Hebrew people, east of Jordan, as a fortress of defense against the Syrians. Jehoram had regained it (ch. 8. 29). But the Israelitish army was still encamped there, under the command of Jehu. **Elisha called one of the children of the prophets**—This errand referred to the last commission given to Elijah in Horeb (1 Kings, 19. 16). **box of oil**—(see 1 Samuel, 10. 1). 2. **carry him to an inner chamber**—Both to insure the safety of the messenger, and to prevent all obstruction in the execution of the business. 3. **I have anointed thee king over Israel**—This was only a part of the message; the full announcement of which is given (v. 7-10). **flee and tarry not**—For fear of being surprised and overtaken by the spies, or servants of the court. 4. **So the young man, . . . went to Ramoth-gilead**—His ready undertaking of this delicate and hazardous mission was an eminent proof of his piety and obedience. The act of anointing being done through a commissioned prophet, was a Divine intimation of his investiture with the sovereign power. But it was sometimes done long prior to the actual possession of the throne (1 Samuel, 16. 13), and, in like manner, the commission had, in this instance, been given also a long time before to Elijah; who, for good reasons, left it in charge to Elisha, and he waited God's time and command for executing it. [POOLE.] 10. **in the portion of Jezreel**—*i. e.*, that had formerly been the vineyard of Naboth. 11. **Is all well? &c.**—Jehu's attendants knew that the stranger belonged to the order of the prophets by his garb, gestures and form of address; and soldiers like them very readily concluded such persons to be crack-brained, not only from the sordid negligence of their personal appearance, and their open contempt of the world, but from the religious pursuits, in which their whole lives were spent, and the grotesque actions which they frequently performed (Cf. Jeremiah, 29. 26). 13. **they hasten, and took every man his garment**—The upper cloak which they spread on the ground, as a token of their homage to their distinguished commander (Matthew, 21. 7).

**top of the stairs**—From the room where the prophet had privately anointed Jehu. That general returned to join his brother officers in the public apartment, who, immediately on learning his destined elevation, conducted him to the top of the stairs leading to the roof, and which was the most conspicuous place of an Oriental structure that could be chosen, being at the very top of the gate-building, and fully in view of the people and military in the open ground in front of the building. [KITTO.] The popularity of Jehu with the army thus favoured the designs of Providence in procuring his immediate and enthusiastic proclamation as king, and the top of the stairs was taken as a most convenient substitute for a throne. 14, 15. **Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead**—Rather, was keeping, guarding or besieging it, with the greater part of the military force of Israel, which, owing to his wounds having compelled the king's retirement from the scene of action, were left in command of Jehu. 16. **So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel**—Full of ambitious designs, he immediately proceeded to cross the Jordan, to execute his commission on the house of Ahab. 17. **There stood a watchman on the tower of Jezreel**—The Hebrew palaces, besides being situated on hills, had usually towers attached to them, not only for the pleasure of a fine prospect, but as posts of useful observation. The ancient watch-tower of Jezreel must have commanded a view of the whole region eastward, nearly down to the Jordan. Beth-shan stands on a rising ground about six or seven miles distant below it, in a narrow part of the plain; and when Jehu and his retinue reached that point between Gilboa and Beth-shan, they would be fully descried by the watchman on the tower, a report being made to Joram in his palace below. A messenger on horseback is quickly dispatched down into the plain to meet the ambiguous host, and question the object of their approach. **Is it peace?**—We may safely assume that this messenger would meet Jehu at the distance of three miles or more. On the report made of his being detained, and turned into the rear of the still advancing troops, a second messenger is in like manner dispatched, who would naturally meet Jehu at the distance of a mile, or a mile and a half, down on the plain. He also being turned into the rear, the watchman now distinctly perceived **the driving to be like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously**—The alarmed monarch, now awakened to a sense of his impending danger, quickly summons his forces to meet the crisis, and, accompanied by Ahaziah, king of Judah, the two sovereigns ascend their chariots to make a feeble resistance to the impetuous onset of Jehu, who quickly from the plain ascends the steep northern sides of the site on which Jezreel stood, and the conflicting parties meet in "the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite," where Joram is quickly dispatched by an arrow from the strong arm of Jehu. We were impressed with the obvious accuracy of the sacred historian; the *localities* and *distances* being such as seem naturally to be required by the incidents related, affording just time for the transactions to have occurred in the order in which they are recorded. [HOWE.] 25. **Cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, &c.**—

According to the doom pronounced by Divine authority on Ahab (I Kings, 21. 19), but which on his repentance was deferred to be executed on his son. 26. **The blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord**—Although their death is not expressly mentioned, it is plainly implied in the confiscation of his property (see I Kings, 21. 16).

27-35. **AHAZIAH IS SLAIN.** 27. **Ahaziah**—Was grand-nephew to king Joram, and great-grandson to king Ahab. **Ibleam**—Near Megiddo, in the tribe of Issachar (Joshua, 17. 11; Judges, 1. 27), and Gur was an adjoining hill. 30. Jezebel painted her face—*lit.*, her eyes, according to a custom universal in the East among women, of staining the eye-lids with a black powder, made of pulverized antimony, or lead-ore, mixed with oil, and applied with a small brush on the border, so that by this dark ligament on the edge, the largeness as well as the luster of the eye itself was thought to be increased. Her object was by her royal attire, not to captivate, but to overawe Jehu. 35. **found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands, &c.**—The dog has a rooted aversion to prey on the human hands and feet.

36, 37. **JEZEBEL EATEN BY DOGS.** 36. **he said, This is the word of the Lord**—(see I Kings, 21. 23). Jehu's statement, however, was not a literal, but a paraphrased quotation of Elijah's prophecy.

## CHAPTER X.

1-17. **JEHU CAUSES SEVENTY OF AHAB'S CHILDREN TO BE BEHEADED.** 1. **Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria**—As it appears (*v.* 13) that grandsons are included, it is probable that this number comprehended the whole posterity of Ahab. Their being all assembled in that capital might arise from their being left there on the king's departure for Ramoth-gilead, or from their taking refuge in some of the strongholds of that city on the news of Jehu's conspiracy. It may be inferred from the tenor of Jehu's letters, that their first intention was to select the fittest of the royal family and set him up as king, or, perhaps, this challenge of Jehu was designed as a stroke of policy on his part to elicit their views, and try whether they were inclined to be pacific or hostile. The bold character of the man, and the rapid success of his conspiracy terrified the civic authorities of Samaria and Jezreel into submission. 5. **he that was over the house**—The governor or chamberlain of the palace. **the bringers-up of the children**—Anciently, and still also in many Eastern countries, the principal grandees were charged with the support and education of the royal princes. This involved a heavy expense, which they were forced to bear, but for which they endeavoured to find some compensation in the advantages of their connection with the court. 6. **take ye the heads of the men, your master's sons**—The barbarous practice of a successful usurper slaughtering all who may have claims to the throne, has been frequently exemplified in the ancient and modern histories of the East. 8. **lay ye them in two heaps at**

**the entering in of the gate, &c.**—The exhibition of the heads of enemies is always considered a glorious trophy. Sometimes a pile of heads is erected at the gate of the palace; and a head of peculiarly striking appearance selected to grace the summit of the pyramid. 9. **said to all the people, Ye be righteous, &c.**—A great concourse was assembled to gaze on this novel and ghastly spectacle. The speech which Jehu addressed to the spectators was artfully framed, to impress their minds with the idea that so wholesale a massacre, done without his order or connivance, was the secret result of the Divine judgment denounced on the house of Ahab; and the effect of it was to prepare the public mind for hearing, without horror, of a similar revolting tragedy which was soon after perpetrated, viz., the extinction of all the influential friends and supporters of the dynasty of Ahab, including those of the royal house of Judah. 13. **We are the brethren of Ahaziah**—*i. e.*, not full, but step-brothers, sons of Jehoram by various concubines. Ignorant of the revolution that had taken place, they were traveling to Samaria on a visit to their royal relatives of Israel, when they were seized and put to death, from the apprehension that they might probably stimulate and strengthen the party that still remained faithful in their allegiance to Ahab's dynasty. **children of the queen**—*i. e.*, of the queen-mother, or regent, Jezebel. 15-18. **Jehonadab the son of Rechab**—(see 1 Chronicles, 2. 55). A person who, from his piety and simple, primitive manner of life (Jeremiah, 35), was highly esteemed, and possessed great influence in the country. Jehu saw in a moment the advantage that his cause would gain from the friendship and countenance of this venerable man in the eyes of the people, and accordingly paid him the distinguished attention of inviting him to a seat in his chariot. **give me thine hand**—not simply to aid him in getting up, but for a more significant and important purpose—the giving, or rather joining hands, being the recognized mode of striking a league or covenant, as well as of testifying fealty to a new sovereign; accordingly, “it is said,” he (Jehonadab) gave him (Jehu) his hand.

18-29. **HE DESTROYS THE WORSHIPPERS OF BAAL.** 19. **Call unto me all the prophets of Baal**—The votaries of Baal are here classified under the several titles of prophets, priests and servants, or worshippers generally. They might be easily convened into one spacious temple, and their number had been greatly diminished both by the influential ministrations of Elijah and Elisha, and also from the late king Joram's neglect and discontinuance of the worship. Jehu's appointment of a solemn sacrifice in honour of Baal, and a summons to all his worshippers to join in its celebration, was a deep laid plot, which he had resolved upon for their extinction; a measure in perfect harmony with the Mosaic law, and worthy of a constitutional king of Israel. It was done, however, not from religious but purely political motives, because he believed that the interests of the Baalites were inseparably bound up with the dynasty of Ahab, and because he hoped that by their extermination he would secure the attachment of the far larger and more influential party who worshipped God in Israel.

Jehonadab's concurrence must have been given in the belief of his being actuated solely by the highest principles of piety and zeal.

22. **Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal**—The priests of Baal were clad, probably, in robes of white byssus, while they were engaged in the functions of their office, and these were kept under the care of an officer, in a particular wardrobe of Baal's temple. This treacherous massacre, and the means taken to accomplish it, are paralleled by the slaughter of the Janissaries and other terrible tragedies in the modern history of the East.

29. **Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam . . . Jehu departed not from after them**—Jehu had no intention of carrying his zeal for the Lord beyond a certain point, and, as he considered it impolitic to encourage his subjects to travel to Jerusalem, he re-established the symbolic worship of the calves.

## CHAPTER XI.

1-3. JEHOASH SAVED FROM ATHALIAH'S MASSACRE. 1. **Athaliah**—(see 2 Chronicles, 22. 2). She had possessed great influence over her son, who, by her counsels, had ruled in the spirit of the house of Ahab. **destroyed all the seed royal**—all connected with the royal family who might have urged a claim to the throne, and who had escaped the murderous hands of Jehu (2 Chronicles, 21. 2-4; 22. 1; ch. 10. 13, 14). This massacre she was incited to perpetrate—partly from a determination not to let David's family outlive her's—partly as a measure of self defense to secure herself against the violence of Jehu, who was bent on destroying the whole of Ahab's posterity to which she belonged (ch. 8. 18-26); but chiefly from personal ambition to rule, and a desire to establish the work of Baal. Such was the sad fruit of the unequal alliance between the son of the pious Jehoshaphat, and a daughter of the idolatrous and wicked house of Ahab. 2 **Jehosheba**—or Jehoshabeath (2 Chronicles, 22. 11). **daughter of King Joram**—not by Athaliah, but by a secondary wife. **stole him from among the king's sons which were slain**—either from among the corpses, he being considered dead, or out of the palace nursery. **hid him in the bed chamber**—For the use of the priests, which was in some part of the temple (*v.* 3), and of which Jehoiada and his wife had the sole charge. What is called, however, the bed chamber in the East is not the kind of apartment that we understand by the name, but a small closet, into which are flung, during the day, the mattresses and other bedding materials spread on the floors or divans of the sitting-rooms by day. Such a lumber-room was well suited to be a convenient place for the recovery of his wounds, and a hiding place for the royal infant and his nurse.

4-12. HE IS MADE KING. 4. **In the seventh year**—viz., of the reign of Athaliah, and the rescue of Jehoash. **Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers, &c.**—He could scarcely have obtained such a general convocation except at the time, or on pretext, of a public and solemn festival. Having revealed to them the secret of the

young king's preservation, and entered into a covenant with them for the overthrow of the tyrant, he then arranged with them the plan and time of carrying their plot into execution (see 2 Chronicles, 22. 10-12; 23). The conduct of Jehoiada, who acted the leading and chief part in this conspiracy, admits of an easy and full justification; for, while Athaliah was a usurper, and belonged to a race devoted by Divine denunciation to destruction, even his own wife had a better and stronger claim to the throne. The sovereignty of Judah had been divinely appropriated to the family of David, and, therefore, the young prince, on whom it was proposed to confer the crown, possessed an inherent right to it, of which a usurper could not deprive him. Moreover, Jehoiada was, most probably, the high priest, whose official duty it was to watch over the due execution of God's laws, and who, in his present movement, was encouraged and aided by the countenance and support of the chief authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, in the country. In addition to all these considerations, he seems to have been directed by an impulse of the Divine Spirit, through the counsels and exhortations of the prophets of the time.

**13-16. ATHALIAH SLAIN.** 13. **Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people**—The profound secrecy with which the conspiracy had been conducted, rendered the unusual acclamations of the vast assembled crowd the more startling, and roused the suspicions of the tyrant. **she came into the temple of the Lord**—*i. e.*, the courts, which she was permitted to enter by Jehoiada's direction (*v.* 8), in order that she might be secured. 14. **the king stood by a pillar**—or on a platform, erected for that purpose (2 Chronicles, 6. 13). 15. **without the ranges**—*i. e.*, fences, that the sacred place might not be stained with human blood.

**17. JEHOIADA RESTORES GOD'S WORSHIP.** 17. **a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people**—The covenant with the Lord was a renewal of the national covenant with Israel (Exodus, 19. 24; "to be unto him a people of inheritance," Deuteronomy, 4. 6; 27. 9). The covenant between the king and the people was the consequence of this, and by it the king bound himself to rule according to the Divine law, while the people engaged to submit to give him allegiance as the Lord's anointed. The immediate fruit of this renewal of the covenant was the destruction of the temple, and the slaughter of the priests of Baal (see ch. 10. 27); the restoration of the pure worship of God in all its ancient integrity, and the establishment of the young king on the hereditary throne of Judah.

## CHAPTER XII.

**1-18. JEHOASH REIGNS WELL WHILE JEHOIADA LIVED.** 2. **Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord**—So far as related to his outward actions and the policy of his government. But it is evident from the sequel of his history, that the rectitude of his administration was owing more to the salutary influence of his preserver and tutor, Jehoiada, than to the honest

and sincere dictates of his own mind. 3. **But the high places were not taken away**—The popular fondness for the private and disorderly rites performed in the groves and recesses of hills was so inveterate that even the most powerful monarchs had been unable to accomplish their suppression; no wonder that, in the early reign of a young king, and after the gross irregularities that had been allowed during the mal-administration of Athaliah, the difficulty of putting an end to the superstitions associated with “the high places” was greatly increased. 4. **Jehoash said to the priests, &c.**—There is here given an account of the measures which the young king took for repairing the temple by the levying of taxes. 1. “The money of every one that passeth the account,” viz., half a shekel, as an offering to the Lord (Exodus, 30. 13). 2. “The money that every man is set at,” *i. e.*, the redemption-price of every one who had devoted himself or any thing belonging to him to the Lord, and the amount of which was estimated according to certain rules (Leviticus, 27. 1-8). 3. Free-will or voluntary offerings made to the sanctuary. The first two were paid annually (see 2 Chronicles, 24. 5). 7-10. **Why repair ye not the breaches of the house?**—This mode of collection not proving so productive as was expected, the dilatoriness of the priests was the chief cause of the failure, and a new arrangement was proposed. A chest was placed by the high priest at the entrance into the temple, into which the money given by the people for the repairs of the temple was to be put by the Levites who kept the door. The object of this chest was to make a separation between the money to be raised for the building from the other moneys destined for the general use of the priests, in the hope that the people would be more liberal in their contributions, when it was known that their offerings would be devoted to the special purpose of making the necessary repairs; and that the duty of attending to this work was no longer to devolve on the priests, but to be undertaken by the king. 11-13. **they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work**—The king sent his secretary along with an agent of the high priest (2 Chronicles, 24. 11) to count the money in the chest from time to time, and deliver the amount to the overseers of the building who paid the workmen and purchased all necessary materials. The custom of putting sums of certain amount in bags, which are labeled and sealed by a proper officer, is a common way of using the currency in Turkey and other Eastern countries. 13-16. **Howbeit there were not made bowls, &c.**—When the repairs of the temple had been completed, the surplus was appropriated to the purchase of the temple furniture. The integrity of the overseers of the work being undoubted, no account was exacted of the way in which they applied the money given to them, while other moneys levied at the temple were left to the disposal of the priests as the law directed (Leviticus, 5. 16; Numbers, 5. 8). 17, 18. **Then Hazel fought against Gath**—(see 2 Chronicles, 24. 23, 24).

19-21. **HE IS SLAIN.** 20. **his servants arose . . . and slew Joash in the house of Milo**—(see also 2 Chronicles, 24. 25).



## CHAPTER XIII.

**1-7. JEHOAHAZ'S WICKED REIGN OVER ISRAEL. 1. Jehoahaz reigned seventeen years** — Under his government, which pursued the policy of his predecessors regarding the support of the calf-worship, Israel's apostacy from the true God became greater and more confirmed than in the time of his father Jehu. The national chastisement, when it came, was consequently the more severe; and the instruments employed by the Lord in scourging the revolted nation were Hazael and his son and general Ben-hadad, in resisting whose successive invasions the Israelitish army was sadly reduced and weakened. In the extremity of his distress, Jehoahaz besought the Lord and was heard, not on his own account (Psalm 66. 18; Proverbs, I. 28; 15. 8), but that of the ancient covenant with the patriarchs (*v.* 23). **4. He saw the oppression of Israel** — *i. e.*, commiserated the fallen condition of His chosen people. The Divine honour and the interests of true religion required that deliverance should be granted them to cheek the triumph of the idolatrous enemy, and put an end to their blasphemous taunts that God had forsaken Israel (Deuteronomy, 32. 27; Psalm 12. 4). **5. A saviour** — This refers neither to some patriotic defender, nor some signal victory, but to the deliverance obtained for Israel by the two successors of Jehoahaz, *viz.*, Joash, who regained all the cities which the Syrians had taken from his father (*v.* 25); and Jeroboam, who restored the former boundaries of Israel (ch. 14. 25). **6. There remained the grove — Asherah** — the idol set up by Ahab (1 Kings, 16. 33), and which ought to have been demolished (Deuteronomy, 7. 5). **7. Made them like the dust in threshing** — Threshing in the East is performed in the open air upon a level plot of ground, daubed over with a covering to prevent, as much as possible, the earth, sand or gravel from rising; a great quantity of them all, notwithstanding this precaution, must unavoidably be taken up with the grain; at the same time the straw is shattered to pieces. Hence it is a most significant figure, frequently employed by Orientals to describe a state of national suffering, little short of extermination (Isaiah, 21. 10; Micah, 4. 12; Jeremiah, 51. 33). The figure originated in a barbarous war-custom, which Hazael literally followed (Amos, 1. 3, 4; Cf. 2 Samuel, 8. 31; Judges, 8. 7).

**8-12. JOASH SUCCEEDS HIM. 8. His might** — This is particularly noticed in order to show that the grievous oppression from foreign enemies, by which the Israelites were ground down, was not owing to the cowardice or imbecility of their king, but solely to the righteous and terrible judgment of God for their foul apostacy. **12, 13. His might, wherewith he fought against Amaziah** — (see ch. 14. 8-14). The usual summary of his life and reign occurs rather early, and is again repeated in the account given of the reign of the king of Judah (ch. 14. 15). **14-19. Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died** — Every man's death is occasioned by some disease, and so was Elisha's. But, in intimating it, there seems a contrast tacitly made between him and his prophetic pre-

decessor, who did not die. **Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face**—Visited him where he was lying ill of this mortal sickness, and expressed deep sorrow, not from the personal respect he bore for the prophet, but for the incalculable loss his death would occasion to the kingdom. **my father, my father! &c.**—(see ch. 2. 12). These words seem to have been a complimentary phrase applied to one who was thought an eminent guardian and deliverer of his country; and the particular application of them to Elisha, who, by his counsels and prayers, had obtained many glorious victories for Israel, shows that the king possessed some measure of faith and trust, which, though weak, was accepted, and called for the prophet's dying benediction. 15. **Take bow and arrows**—Hostilities were usually proclaimed by a herald, sometimes by a king or general, making a public and formal discharge of an arrow into the enemy's country. Elisha directed Joash to do this, as a symbolical act, designed to intimate more fully and significantly the victories promised to the king of Israel over the Syrians. His laying his hands upon the king's hands was to represent the power imparted to the bow-shot as coming from the Lord through the medium of the prophet. His shooting the first arrow eastward—to that part of his kingdom which the Syrians had taken—and which was east of Samaria, was a declaration of war against them for the invasion. His shooting the other arrows into the ground was in token of the number of victories he was to gain; but his stopping at the third betrayed the weakness of his faith; for, as the discharged arrow signified a victory over the Syrians, it is evident that the more arrows he shot, the more victories he would gain; and, as he stopped so soon, his conquests would be incomplete. 20. **Elisha died**—Enjoying a happier life than Elijah, as he possessed a milder character, and bore a less hard commission—his rough garment was honoured even at the court. **coming in of the year**—*i. e.*, the spring, the usual season of beginning campaigns in ancient times. Predatory bands from Moab generally made incursions at that time on the lands of Israel. The bearers of a corpse, alarmed by the appearance of one of these bands, hastily deposited, as they passed that way, their load in Elisha's sepulcher, which might be easily done by removing the stone at the mouth of the cave. According to the Jewish and Eastern custom, his body, as well as that of the man who was miraculously restored, was not laid in a coffin but only swathed; so that the bodies could be brought into contact; and the object of the miracle was to stimulate the king and people of Israel's faith in the still unaccomplished predictions of Elisha respecting the war with the Syrians. Accordingly the historian forthwith records the historical fulfillment of the prediction (*v.* 22-25) in the defeat of the enemy, in the recovery of the cities that had been taken, and their restoration to the kingdom of Israel.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**1-6. AMAZIAH'S GOOD REIGN OVER JUDAH. 36. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father**—The beginning of his reign was excellent, for he acted the part of a constitutional king, according to the law of God, yet not with perfect sincerity of heart (Cf. 2 Chronicles, 25. 2), for, as in the case of his father Joash, the early promise was belied by the devious course he personally followed in later life (see 2 Chronicles, 20. 14), as well as by the public irregularities he tolerated in the kingdom. **5. as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand**—It was an act of justice, no less than of filial piety, to avenge the murder of his father; but it is evident that the two assassins must have possessed considerable weight and influence, as the king was obliged to retain them in his service, and durst not, for fear of their friends and supporters, institute proceedings against them until his power had been fully consolidated. **6. But the children of the murderers he slew not**—This moderation, inspired by the Mosaic law (Deuteronomy, 24. 16), displays the good character of this prince; for the course thus pursued toward the families of the regicides was directly contrary to the prevailing customs of antiquity, according to which all connected with the criminals were doomed to unsparing destruction.

**7. HE SMITES EDMOM. 7. He slew of Edom, in the valley of Salt, ten thousand**—In the reign of Joram the Edomites had revolted (see ch. 8. 20). But Amaziah, determined to reduce them to their former subjection, formed a hostile expedition against them, in which he routed their army, and made himself master of their capital. **the valley of Salt**—is that part of the Ghor which comprises the Salt and Sandy Plain to the south of the Dead Sea. **Selah**—*lit.*, Selah—(rock) generally thought to be Petra. **Joktheel**—*i. e.*, *given or conquered by God*. See the history of this conquest more fully detailed (2 Chronicles, 25. 6-16).

**8-16. JOASH DEFEATS HIM. 8. Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel**—This bold and haughty challenge, which was most probably stimulated by a desire of satisfaction for the outrages perpetrated by the discharged auxiliaries of Israel (2 Chronicles, 25. 13), on the towns that lay in their way home, as well as by revenge for the massacre of his ancestors by Jehu (ch. 9) sprang, there is as little doubt, from pride and self-confidence, inspired by his victory over the Edomites. **9. Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah**—People in the East very often express their sentiments in a parabolic form, especially when they intend to convey unwelcome truths, or a contemptuous sneer. This was the design of the admonitory fable related by Joash in his reply. The thistle, a low shrub, might be chosen to represent Amaziah, a petty prince; the cedar, the powerful sovereign of Israel, and the wild beast that trode down the thistle the overwhelming army with which Israel could desolate Judah. But, perhaps, without making so minute an application, the parable may be explained generally, as

describing in a striking manner the effects of pride and ambition, towering far beyond their natural sphere, and sure to fall with a sudden and ruinous crash. The moral of the fable is contained in *v.* 10. 11. **But Amaziah would not hear**—The sarcastic tenor of this reply incited the king of Judah the more; for, being in a state of judicial blindness and infatuation (2 Chronicles, 25. 20), he was immovably determined on war. But the superior energy of Joash surprised him ere he had completed his military preparations. Pouring a numerous army into the territory of Judah, he encountered Amaziah in a pitched battle, routed his army, took himself prisoner, and having marched to Jerusalem, not only demolished part of the city walls, but plundered the treasures of the palace and temple, and taking hostages to prevent any farther molestation from Judah, terminated the war. Without leaving a garrison in Jerusalem, he returned to his capital with all convenient speed, his presence and whole forces being required to repel the troublesome incursions of the Syrians.

17, 20. **HE IS SLAIN BY A CONSPIRACY.** 19. **they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem**—Amaziah's apostacy (2 Chronicles, 25. 27) was followed by a general mal-administration, especially the disastrous issue of the war with Israel—the ruinous condition of Jerusalem, the plunder of the temple, and the loss of their children who were taken as hostages—lost him the respect and attachment not of the grandes only, but of his subjects generally, who were in rebellion. The king fled in terror to Lachish, a frontier town of the Philistines, where, however, he was traced and murdered. His friends had his corpse brought without any pomp or ceremony, in a chariot to Jerusalem, where he was interred among his royal ancestors.

21-23. **AZARIAH SUCCEEDS HIM.** 21. **all the people of Judah took Azariah**—or Uzziah (ch. 15. 30; 2 Chronicles, 26. 1). The popular opposition had been personally directed against Amaziah as the author of their calamities, but it was not extended to his family or heir. 22. **He built Elath**—fortified that sea-port. It had revolted with the rest of Edom, but was now recovered by Uzziah, his father, who did not complete the conquest of Edom, having left him that work to do.

24-29. **JEROBOAM'S WICKED REIGN OVER ISRAEL.** 23. **Jeroboam, the son of Joash, the king of Israel**—This was Jeroboam II, who, on regaining the lost territory, raised the kingdom to great political power (*v.* 25), but adhered to the favourite religious policy of the Israelitish sovereigns (*v.* 24); and, while God granted him so great a measure of national prosperity and emirance, the reason is expressly stated (*v.* 26, 27) to be that the purposes of the Divine covenant forbade as yet the overthrow of the kingdom of the ten tribes (see ch. 13. 23).

## CHAPTER XV.

**1-4. AZARIAH'S REIGN OVER JUDAH. 1. In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam**—It is thought that the throne of Judah continued vacant eleven or twelve years, between the death of Amaziah and the inauguration of his son Azariah, who, being an infant four years old when his father was murdered, a regency was appointed during his minority. **Azariah began to reign**—The character of his reign is described by the brief formula employed by the inspired historian, in recording the religious policy of the later kings. But his reign was a very active as well as eventful one, and is fully related (2 Chronicles, 26). Elated by the possession of great power and presumptuously arrogating to himself, as the heathen kings, the functions both of the real and sacerdotal offices, he was punished with leprosy, which, as the offense was capital (Numbers, 8. 7), was equivalent to death; for this disease excluded him from all society; and while Jotham, his son, as his viceroy, administered the affairs of the kingdom—being about fifteen years of age (Cf. *v.* 33)—he had to dwell in a place apart by himself (see ch. 7. 3). After a long reign he died, and was buried in the royal burying-field, though not in the royal cemetery of the "city of David"—(2 Chronicles, 26. 33).

**8-16. ZECHARIAH'S REIGN OVER ISRAEL. 8. In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah, king of Judah, did Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel**—There was an interregnum from some unknown cause between the reign of Jeroboam and the accession of his son, which lasted, according to some, for ten or twelve years; according to others, for twenty-two years or more. This prince pursued the religious policy of the calf-worship, and his reign was short, being abruptly terminated by the hand of violence. In his fate was fulfilled the prophecy addressed to Jehu (ch. 10. 30; also Hosea, 1. 4), that his family would possess the throne of Israel for four generations; and, accordingly, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jehoram and Zechariah were his successors. But there his dynasty terminated; and perhaps it was the public knowledge of this prediction that prompted the murderous design of Shallum. **13-17. Shallum . . . reigned a full month**—Being opposed and slain by Menahem, who, according to Josephus, was commander of the forces, which, on the report of the king's murder, were besieging Tirzah, a town twelve miles east of Samaria, and formerly a seat of the kings of Israel. Raising the siege he marched directly against the usurper, slew him, and reigned in his stead. **16. Menahem smote Tiphshah**—Thapsacus, on the Euphrates, the border city of Solomon's kingdom (1 Kings, 4. 24). The inhabitants refusing to open their gates to him, Menahem took it by storm, and, having spoiled it, committed the most barbarous excesses, without regard either to age or sex.

**17-21. MENAHEM'S. 17. reigned ten years in Samaria**—His government was conducted on the religious policy of his predecessors. **18. Pul, the king of Assyria**—This is the first Assyrian king after Nimrod, who is mentioned in Biblical history. His

name has been recently identified with that of Phalluka on the monuments of Nineveh, and that of Menahem discovered also. **came against the land**—Elsewhere it is said “Ephraim (Israel) goes to the Assyrian.” The two statements may be reconciled thus: “Pul, of his own motion, induced, perhaps, by the expedition of Menahem against Thapsacus, advanced against the kingdom of Israel; then Menahem sent him 1,000 talents, in order not only to divert him from his plans of conquest, but, at the same time, to purchase his friendship and aid for the establishment of his own precarious sovereignty, so that Menahem did not properly invite the Assyrian into the land, but only changed the enemy, when marching against the country, by this tribute, into a confederate for the security of his usurped dominion, which the prophet Hosea, less concerned about the historical fact than the disposition betrayed therein, might very well censure as a going of Ephraim to the Assyrians (Hosea, 5. 13; 7. 1; 8. 9), and a covenant making with Asshur (ch. 12. 1). [KEIL.] **a thousand talents of silver**—Equal to £362,200. This tribute, which Menahem raised by a tax on the grandes of Israel, bribed Pul to return to his own country (see 1 Chronicles, 5. 26).

**22-24. PEKAHIAH'S.** 23. **Pekahiah . . . son of Menahem began to reign**—On comparing the date given with Azariah's reign, it seems that several months had intervened between the death of Menahem and the accession of Pekahiah, probably owing to a contest about the throne. 25. **With Argob and Arieah, &c.**—Many commentators view these as the captain's accomplices. But it is more probable that they were influential friends of the king's, who were murdered along with him.

**27-31. PEKAH'S.** 29. **In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath-pileser**—This monarch, who succeeded Pul on the throne of Assyria, is the only one of all the kings who does not give his genealogy, and is therefore supposed to have been a usurper. His annals have been discovered in the Nimroud Mound—describing this expedition into Syria. The places taken are here mentioned as they occurred and were conquered in the progress of an invasion. 30. **Hosea the son of Elah made a conspiracy . . . and slew him**—He did not, however, obtain possession of the kingdom till about nine or ten years after the perpetration of this crime. [HALES.]

**32-38. JOTHAM'S REIGN OVER JUDAH.** **In the twentieth year of Jotham**—Jotham's reign having lasted only sixteen years, the meaning is, that the reign of Hosea began in the twentieth after the beginning of Jotham's reign—the sacred historian, having not yet introduced the name of Ahaz, reckoned the date by Jotham, whom he had already mentioned (see 2 Chronicles, 27. 8). 33. **Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign**—*i. e.*, alone—for he had ruled as his father's viceroy. 35. **The higher gate of the house of the Lord**—Not the temple itself, but one of its courts—probably that which led into the palace (2 Chronicles, 23. 20). 37. **The Lord began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, &c.**—This is the first intimation of the hostile feelings

of the kings of Israel and Syria to Judah, which led them to form an alliance and make joint preparations for war, which, however, was not actually waged till the reign of Ahaz.

## CHAPTER XVI:

**1-16. AHAZ'S WICKED REIGN OVER JUDAH. 1-4. Ahaz did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord**—The character of this king's reign, the voluptuousness and religious degeneracy of all classes of the people are graphically portrayed in the writings of Isaiah, who prophesied at that period. The great increase of worldly wealth and luxury in the reigns of Azariah and Jotham had introduced a host of corruptions which, during his reign, and by the influence of Azah, bore fruit in the idolatrous practices of every kind which pervaded in all parts of the kingdom (see 2 Chronicles, 28. 24). **3. Walked in the way of the kings of Israel**—This is descriptive of the early part of his reign, when, like the kings of Israel, he patronized the symbolic worship of God by images, but he gradually went farther into gross idolatry (2 Chronicles, 28. 2). **made his son to pass through the fire**—(ch. 23. 10). The hands of the idol Moloch being red-hot, the children were passed through between them, which was considered a form of lustration; but there is reason to believe that, in certain circumstances, the children were burnt to death (Psalm 106. 37). This was strongly prohibited in the law (Leviticus, 18. 21; 20. 2-5; Deuteronomy, 18. 10), although there is no evidence that it was practiced in Israel till the time of Ahaz. **5. Then Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to war against Jerusalem**—Notwithstanding their great efforts and military preparations, they failed to take it, and, being disappointed, raised the siege and returned home (Cf. Isaiah, 7. 1). **6 Rezin recovered Elath**—which Azariah had got into his possession (ch. 14. 22). **The Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day**—The Septuagint has "the Edomites," which the most judicious commentators and travelers [ROBINSON] prefer. **7-9. So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser**—In spite of the assurance given him by Isaiah by two signs, the one immediate, the other remote (Isaiah, 7. 14; 8. 4), that the confederate kings would not prevail against him, Ahaz sought aid from the Assyrian monarch, to purchase which he sent the treasures of the palace and temple. Tiglath-pileser marched against Damascus, slew Rezin the king, and carried the people of Damascus into captivity to Kir, which is thought to have been the city Karine (now Kerend) in Media. **10-16. Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser**—This was a visit of respect and perhaps of gratitude. During his stay in that heathen city, Ahaz saw an altar with which he was greatly captivated. Forthwith a sketch of it was transmitted to Jerusalem, with orders to Uriah the priest to get one constructed according to the Damascus model, and let this new altar supersede the old one in the temple Urijah, with culpable complaisance, acted according to his instructions (*v.* 16). The sin in

this affair consisted in meddling with, and improving according to human taste and fancy, the altars of the temple, the patterns of which had been furnished by Divine authority (Exodus, 25. 40; 26. 30; 27. 1; 1 Chronicles, 28. 19). Urijah was one of the witnesses taken by Isaiah to bear his prediction against Syria and Israel (Isaiah, 8. 2).

**17-19. HE SPOILS THE TEMPLE.** 17. **cut off the borders of the bases, &c.**—It is thought that he did this to employ the elaborate sculpture in adorning his palace. 18. **the covert for the Sabbath.**—the portico through which the priests entered the temple on the Sabbath. **the king's entry without**—a private external entrance for the king into the temple. The change made by Ahaz consisted in removing both of these into the temple from fear of the king of Assyria, that, in case of a siege, he might secure the entrance of the temple from him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**1-4. HOSHEA'S WICKED REIGN.** 1. **In the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, began Hoshea to reign**—The statement in ch. 15. 30, may be reconciled with the present passage in the following manner: Hoshea conspired against Pekah in the twentieth year of the latter, which was the eighteenth of Jotham's reign. It was two years before Hoshea was acknowledged king of Israel, *i. e.*, in the fourth of Ahaz and twentieth of Jotham. In the twelfth year of Ahaz his reign began to be tranquil and prosperous. [CALMET.] 2. **he did evil, but not as the kings of Israel**—Unlike his predecessors from the time of Jeroboam, he neither established the rites of Baal nor compelled the people to adhere to the symbolic worship of the calves. But although, in these respects, Hoshea acted as became a constitutional king of Israel; yet, through the influence of the nineteen princes who had swayed the sceptre before him, all of whom had been zealous patrons of idolatry, and many of whom had been also infamous for personal crimes, the whole nation had become so completely demoralized that the righteous judgment of an angry Providence impended over it. 3. **Against him came up Shalmanezzer**—or Shalman (Hosea, 10. 14), the same as the Sargon of Isaiah. Very recently the name of this Assyrian king has been traced on the Ninevite monuments, as concerned in an expedition against a king of Samaria, whose name, though mutilated, Colonel Rawlinson reads as Hoshea. 4. **found conspiracy in Hoshea**—after having paid tribute for several years, Hoshea, determined on throwing off the Assyrian yoke, withheld the stipulated tribute; and Shalmanezzer, incensed at this rebellion, proclaimed war against Israel. This was in the sixth year of Hoshea's reign. **he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt**—the Sabaco of the classic historians, a famous Ethiopian who, for fifty years, occupied the Egyptian throne, and through whose aid Hoshea hoped to resist the threatened attack of the Assyrian conqueror. But Shalmanezzer, marching against him, scoured the whole country of Israel,



besieged the capital, Samaria, and carried the principal inhabitants into captivity in his own land, having taken the king himself and imprisoned him for life. This ancient policy of transplanting a conquered people into a foreign land, was founded on the idea that, among a mixed multitude, differing in language and religion, they would be kept in better subjection and have less opportunity of combining together to recover their independence. **carried Israel away**—*i. e.*, the remaining tribes (see ch. 15. 29), **and placed them, etc.**—this passage GESENIUS renders thus, omitting the particle *by*, which is printed in italics to show it is not in the original: “and placed them in Halah, and on the Chabor, a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.” Halah, the same as Calah (Genesis, 10. 11, 12), in the region of the Laycus or Zab river, about a day’s journey from the ruins of Nineveh. Chabor is a river, and it is remarkable that there is a river rising in the central highlands of Assyria which retains this name Khabour unchanged to the present day. Gozan (pasture), or Zozan, are the highlands of Assyria which afford pasturage. The region in which the Chabor and the Zab rise, and through which they flow, is peculiarly of this character. The Nestorians repair to it with their numerous flocks, spending the summer on the banks or in the highlands of the Chabor or the Zab. Considering the high authority we possess for regarding Gozan and Zozan as one name, there can be no doubt that this is the Gozan referred to in this passage. **cities of the Medes**—“villages,” according to the Syriac and Vulgate versions, or “mountains,” according to the Septuagint. The Medish inhabitants of Gozan, having revolted, had been destroyed by the kings of Assyria, and nothing was more natural than that they should wish to place in it an industrious people, like the captive Israelites, while it was well suited to their pastoral life. [GRANT’S NESTORIANS.]

**5-41. SAMARIA TAKEN, AND ISRAEL FOR THEIR SINS CARRIED CAPTIVE.** 7. **For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned**—There is here given a very full and impressive vindication of the Divine procedure in punishing his highly privileged, but rebellious and apostate, people. No wonder that amid so gross a perversion of the worship of the true God, and the national propensity to do reverence to idols, the Divine patience was exhausted; and that the God whom they had forsaken permitted them to go into captivity, that they might learn the difference between His service and that of their despotic conquerors. 24. **The king of Assyria brought men from Babylone, &c.**—This was not Shalmanezar, but Esar-haddon (Ezekiel, 4. 2). The places vacated by the captive Israelites he ordered to be occupied by several colonies of his own subjects from Babylon and other provinces. **from Cuthah**—The Chaldee form of Cush or Susiana, now Khusistan. **Ava**—Supposed to be Ahivaz, situated on the river Karuns, which falls into the head of the Persian Gulf. **Hamath**—On the Orontes. **Sepharvaim**—Siphara; a city on the Euphrates above Babylon. **placed them to dwell in the cities of Samaria, &c.**—It must not be supposed that the Israelites were universally removed to a man. A remnant was left, chiefly, how-

ever, of the poor and lower classes, with whom these foreign colonists mingled; so that the prevailing character of society about Samaria was heathen, not Israelite; for the Assyrian colonists became masters of the land, and, forming partial intermarriages with the remnant Jews, the inhabitants became a mongrel race, no longer a people of Ephraim (Isaiah, 7. 6), who, imperfectly instructed in the creed of the Jews, acquired also a mongrel doctrine. Being too few to replenish the land, lions, by which the land had been infested (Judges, 14. 5; 1 Samuel, 17. 34; 1 Kings, 13. 24; 20. 36; Song, 4. 8), multiplied and committed frequent ravages upon them. Recognizing in these attacks a judgment from the God of the land, whom they had not worshipped, they petitioned the Assyrian court to send them some Jewish priests who might instruct them in the right way of serving Him. The king, in compliance with their request, sent them one of the exiled priests of Israel, who established his headquarters at Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the Lord. It is not said that he took a copy of the Pentateuch with him, out of which he might teach them. *Oral teaching* was much better fitted for the superstitious people than instruction out of a written book. He could teach them more effectually by word of mouth. Believing that he would adopt the best and simplest method for them, it is unlikely that he took the written law with him, and so gave origin to the Samaritan copy of the Pentateuch, [DAVIDSON'S CRITICISM.] Besides, it is evident from his being one of the exiled priests, and from his settlement at Beth-el, that he was not a Levite, but one of the calf-worshipping priests, and, consequently, that his instructions would neither be sound nor efficient. 29. **Howbeit, every nation made gods of their own**—These Assyrian colonists, however, though instructed in the worship, and acknowledging the being of the God of Israel, did not suppose him to be the only God. Like other heathens, they combined His worship with that of their own gods, and, as they formed a promiscuous society from different nations or provinces, a variety of idols was acknowledged among them. 30. **succoth-benoth**—*i. e.*, the "tents or booths of the daughters," similar to those in which the Babylonian damsels celebrated impure rites (Amos, 2. 8). **Nergal**—The Jewish writers say this idol was in the form of a cock, and it is certain that a cock is often seen associated with a priest on the Assyrian monuments. [LAYARD.] But modern critics, looking to the astrological character of Assyrian idolatry, generally consider Nergal as the planet Mars, the god of war. The name of this idol formed part of the appellation of two of the king of Babylon's princes (Jeremiah, 39. 3). **Ashima**—An idol under the form of an entirely bald he-goat. 31. **Nibhaz**—Under that of a dog—that Egyptian form of animal worship having prevailed in ancient Syria, as is evident from the image of a large dog at the mouth of the Nahrel-Kelb or Dog river. **Tartak**—According to the Rabbis, was in the form of an ass, but others understand it as a planet of ill omen, probably Saturn. **Adrammelch**—Supposed by some to be the same as Molech, and in Assyrian mythology to stand for the sun. It was worshipped in the form of a mule—others maintain in that of a peacock.

**Anammelech** — Worshipped in the form of a hare, others say in that of a goat. 34. **Unto this day** — The time of the Babylonian exile, when this book was composed. Their religion was a strange medley or compound of the service of God and the service of idols. Such was the first settlement of the people, afterward called Samaritans, who were sent from Assyria to colonize the land, when the kingdom of Israel, after having continued 256 years, was overthrown.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**1-3. HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN. 1. Hezekiah . . . began to reign Twenty and five years old** — According to this statement (Cf. ch. 16. 2), he must have been born when his father Ahaz was no more than eleven years old. Paternity at an age so early is not unprecedented in the warm climates of the South, where the human frame is matured sooner than in our northern regions. But the case admits of solution in a different way. It was customary for the later kings of Israel to assume their son and heir into partnership in the government during their lives; and as Hezekiah began to reign in the third year of Hosea (*v.* 1); and Hosea in the twelfth year of Ahaz (ch. 17. 1); it is evident that Hezekiah began to reign in the fourteenth year of Ahaz his father, and so reigned two or three years before his father's death. So that, at the beginning of his reign in conjunction with his father, he might be only twenty-two or three, and Ahaz a few years older than the common calculation makes him. Or the case may be solved thus:—As the ancient writers, in the computation of time, take notice of the year they mention, whether finished or newly begun, so Ahaz might be near twenty-one years old at the beginning of his reign, and near seventeen years older at his death; while, on the other hand, Hezekiah, when he began to reign, might be just entering into his twenty-fifth year, and so Ahaz would be near fourteen years old when his son Hezekiah was born — no uncommon age for a young man to become a father in southern latitudes. [PATRICK.]

**4-37. HE DESTROYS IDOLATRY. 4. He removed the high places and brake the images, &c.** — The methods adopted by this good king for extirpating idolatry, and accomplishing a thorough reformation in religion, are fully detailed (2 Chronicles, 29. 3; 31. 19). But they are here indicated very briefly, and in a sort of passing allusion. **brake in pieces the brazen serpent** — The preservation of this remarkable relic of antiquity (Numbers, 21. 5-10) might, like the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, have remained an interesting and instructive monument of the Divine goodness and mercy to the Israelites in the wilderness; and it must have required the exercise of no small courage and resolution to destroy it. But in the progress of degeneracy it had become an object of idolatrous worship; and as the interests of true religion rendered its demolition necessary, Hezekiah, by taking this bold step, consulted both the glory of God and the good of his country. **unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it** — It is

not to be supposed that this superstitious reverence had been paid to it ever since the time of Moses—for such idolatry would not have been tolerated either by David or by Solomon in the early part of his reign; by Asa or Jehoshaphat had they been aware of such a folly. But the probability is, that the introduction of this superstition does not date earlier than the time when the family of Ahab, by their alliance with the throne of Judah, exercised a pernicious influence in paving the way for all kinds of idolatry. It is possible, however, as some think, that its origin may have arisen out of a misapprehension of Moses' language (Numbers, 21. 8). Serpent-worship, how revolting soever it may appear, was an extensively diffused form of idolatry, and it would obtain an easier reception in Israel, that many of the neighbouring nations, such as the Egyptians and Phœnicians, adored idol gods in the form of serpents as the emblems of health and immortality. 5. **He trusted in the Lord God of Israel**—Without invoking the aid or purchasing the succour of foreign auxiliaries like Asa (1 Kings, 15. 18, 19), and Ahaz (ch. 16. 17; Isaiah, 7). **so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah**—Of course, David and Solomon are excepted, they having had the sovereignty of the whole country. In the petty kingdoms of Judah, Josiah alone had a similar testimony borne to him (ch. 23. 25). But even he was surpassed by Hezekiah, who set about a national reformation at the beginning of his reign, which Josiah did not. The pious character and the excellent course of Hezekiah was prompted, among other secondary influences, by a sense of the calamities his father's wicked career had brought on the country, as well as by the counsels of Isaiah. 7. **he rebelled against the king of Assyria**—*i. e.*, the yearly tribute his father had stipulated to pay, he, with imprudent haste, withdrew. Pursuing the policy of a truly theocratic sovereign, he was, through the Divine blessing which rested on his government, raised to a position of great public and national strength. Shalmaneser had withdrawn from Palestine, being engaged in a war with Tyre, or, probably, was dead; and assuming, consequently, that full independent sovereignty which God had settled on the house of David, he both shook off the Assyrian yoke, and, by an energetic movement against the Philistines, recovered from that people the territory which they had taken from his father Ahaz (2 Chronicles, 28. 18). 13. **Sennacherib**—The son and successor of Shalmaneser. **all the fenced cities of Judah**—Not absolutely the whole of them; for, besides the capital, some strong fortresses held out against the invader (*v.* 17; ch. 19. 8). The following account of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, and the remarkable destruction of his army, is repeated almost verbatim in 2 Chronicles, 33, and Isaiah, 36. 37. The expedition seems to have been directed against Egypt, the conquest of which was long a leading object of ambition with the Assyrian monarchs; but the invasion of Judah necessarily preceded, that country being the key to Egypt, the highway through which the conquerors from Upper Asia had to pass, and having, at this time, formed a league of mutual defense with Egypt (*v.* 24). Moreover, it was now laid completely open by the transplantation

of Israel to Assyria. Overrunning Palestine, Sennacherib laid siege to the fortress of Lachish, which lay seven Roman miles from the Eleutheropolis, and, therefore, south-west of Jerusalem on the way to Egypt. [ROBINSON.] Among the interesting illustrations of sacred history furnished by the recent Assyrian excavations, is a series of bas-reliefs, representing the siege of a town, which the inscription on the sculpture shows to be Lachish, and the figure of a king, whose name is given, on the same inscription, as Sennacherib. The legend, sculptured over the head of the king, ran thus: "Sennacherib, the mighty king, king of the country of Assyria, sitting on the throne of judgment before the city of Lachis (Lakhisha), I give permission for its slaughter." [NINEVEH and BABYLON.] This minute confirmation of the truth of the Bible narrative is given not only by the name Lachish, which is contained in the inscription, but from the physiognomy of the captive brought before the king, which is unmistakably Jewish. 14. **he sent to Lachish, saying, . . . That which thou puttest on me will I bear**—Disappointed in his expectations of aid from Egypt, and feeling himself unable to resist so mighty a conqueror who was menacing Jerusalem itself, Hezekiah made his submission. The payment of 300 talents of silver, and 30 talents of gold, £351,000, brought a temporary respite; but, in raising the imposed tribute, he was obliged not only to drain all the treasures of the palace and the temple, but even to strip the doors and pillars of the sacred edifice of the gold that adorned them.

SENNACHERIB BESIEGES JERUSALEM. 17. **king of Assyria sent Tartan**—general (Isaiah, 20. 1). **Rabsaris**—chief of the eunuchs. **Rab-shakeh**—chief cup-bearer. These were the great officers employed in delivering Sennacherib's insulting message to Hezekiah. On the walls of the palace of Sennacherib, at Khorsabad, certain figures have been identified with the officers of that sovereign mentioned in Scripture. In particular, the figures, Rab-shakeh, Rabsaris and Tartan, appear as full length portraits of the persons holding those offices in the reign of Sennacherib, and probably the very individuals sent on this embassy. **with a great host to Jerusalem**—Engaged in a campaign of three years in Egypt, Sennacherib was forced by the king of Ethiopia to retreat, and discharging his rage against Jerusalem, sent an immense army to summon it to surrender (see 2 Chronicles, 32. 30). **the conduit of the upper pool, &c.**—is the conduit which went from the reservoir of the Upper Gihon (Birket el Mamilla) to the lower pool—the Birket es Sultan. **the highway of the fuller's field**—the public road which passed by that district which had been assigned them for carrying on their business without the city, on account of the unpleasant smell. [KIEL.] 18. **when they had called to the king**—Hezekiah did not make a personal appearance, but commissioned his three principal ministers to meet the Assyrian deputies at a conference outside the city walls. **Eliakim**—Lately promoted to be master of the royal household (Isaiah, 22. 20). **Shebna**—Removed for his pride and presumption (Isaiah, 22. 15) from that office, though still royal secretary. **Joah . . . the recorder**—*i. e.*, the keeper of the chronicles, an important office in Eastern

countries. 19. **Rab-shakeh said**—The insolent tone he assumed appears surprising. But this boasting, both as to matter and manner, his highly coloured picture of his master's powers and resources, and the impossibility of Hezekiah making any effective resistance, heightened by all the arguments and figures which an Oriental imagination could suggest, has been paralleled in all, except the blasphemy, by other messages of defiance sent on similar occasions in the history of the East. 27. **that they may eat, &c.**—This was designed to show the dreadful extremities to which, in the threatened siege, the people of Jerusalem would be reduced.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1-5. HEZEKIAH IN DEEP AFFLICTION. 1. **when king Hezekiah heard it he rent his clothes, &c.**—The rending of his clothes was a mode of expressing horror at the daring blasphemy—the assumption of sackcloth, a sign of his mental distress—his entrance into the temple to pray, the refuge of a pious man in affliction and the forwarding an account of the Assyrian's speech to Isaiah, was to obtain the prophet's counsel and comfort. The expression in which the message was conveyed described, by a strong figure, the desperate condition of the kingdom, together with their own inability to help themselves; and it intimated also a hope that the blasphemous defiance of Jehovah's power, by the impious Assyrian, might lead to some direct interposition for the vindication of His honour and supremacy to all heathen gods. 4. **the living God**—Is a most significant expression, taken in connection with the senseless deities that Rab-shakeh boasted were unable to resist his master's victorious arms.

6, 7. COMFORTED BY ISAIAH. 6. **Isaiah said . . . Be not afraid**—The prophet's answer was most cheering as it held out the prospect of a speedy deliverance from the invader. The blast, the rumour, the fall by the sword, contained a brief prediction that was soon fulfilled in all the three particulars, viz., the alarm that hastened his retreat, the destruction that overtook his army and the violent death that suddenly ended his career.

8-13. SENNACHERIB SENDS A BLASPHEMOUS LETTER TO HEZEKIAH. 8. **Rab-shakeh . . . found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah**—whether Lachish had fallen or not, is not said. But Sennacherib had transferred his battering-rams against the apparently neighbouring fortress of Libnah (Joshua, 10. 29; Cf. 31; 15. 42), where the chief cup-bearer reported the execution of his mission. 9. **when he heard say of Tirhakah, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee, &c.**—This was the "rumour" to which Isaiah referred. Tirhakah reigned in Upper Egypt, while So or Sabaco ruled in Lower Egypt. He was a powerful monarch, another Sesostris, and both he and Sabaco have left many monuments of their greatness. The name and figure of Tirhakah receiving war-captives are still seen in the Egyptian temple of Medinet Abou. This was the expected succour which was sneered at (ch. 18. 21), by Rab-shakeh as "a bruised reed." Rage

against Hezekiah for allying himself with Egypt or the hope of being better able to meet this attack from the south, induced him, after hearing the rumour of Tirhakah's advance, to send a menacing letter to Hezekiah, in order that he might force the king of Judah to an immediate surrender of his capital. This letter, couched in the same vaunting and imperious style as the speech of Rab-shakeh, exceeded it in blasphemy and contained a large enumeration of conquered places, with the view of terrifying Hezekiah and showing him the utter hopelessness of all attempts at resistance.

**14-34. HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER. 14. Hezekiah received the letter . . . and went up into the house of the Lord** — Hezekiah, after reading it, hastened into the temple, spread it in the child-like confidence of faith before the Lord, as containing taunts deeply affecting the Divine honour, and implored deliverance from this proud defier of God and man. The devout spirit of this prayer, the recognition of the Divine Being in the plenitude of His Majesty — so strikingly contrasted with the fancy of the Assyrians as to his merely local power — his acknowledgment of the conquests obtained over other lands, and the destruction of their wooden idols which, according to the Assyrian practice, were committed to the flames — because their tutelary deities were no gods; and the object for which he supplicated the Divine interposition, that all the kingdoms of the earth might know that the Lord was the only God — this was an attitude worthy to be assumed by a pious theocratic king of the chosen people. **20. Then Isaiah . . . sent** — A revelation having been made to Isaiah, the prophet announced to the king that his prayer was heard. The prophetic message consisted of three different portions: *First*, Sennacherib is apostrophized (*v.* 21-28) in a highly poetical strain, admirably descriptive of the turgid vanity, haughty pretensions, and presumptuous impiety of the Assyrian despot. *Secondly*, Hezekiah is addressed (*v.* 29-31), and a sign given him of the promised deliverance, viz., that for two years the presence of the enemy would interrupt the peaceful pursuits of husbandry, but on the third year the people would be in circumstances to till their fields and vineyards, and reap the fruits as formerly. *Thirdly*, the issue of Sennacherib's invasion is announced (*v.* 32-34). **33. shall not come into this city** — Nor approach near enough to shoot an arrow, not even from the most powerful engine which throws missiles to the greatest distance, nor shall he occupy any part of the ground before the city by a fence, a mantelet, or covering for men employed in a siege, nor cast (raise) a bank (mound) of earth, overtopping the city walls, whence he may see and command the interior of the city. None of these, which were the principal modes of attack followed in ancient military art, should Sennacherib be permitted to adopt. Though the army under Rab-shakeh marched toward Jerusalem, and encamped at a little distance with a view to blockade it, they delayed laying siege to it, probably waiting till the king, having taken Lachish and Libnah, should bring up his detachment, that with the whole combined forces of Assyria they might invest the capital. So deter-

mined was this invader to conquer Judah and the neighbouring countries (Isaiah, 10. 7), that nothing but a Divine interposition could have saved Jerusalem. It might be supposed that the powerful monarch who overran Palestine, and carried away the tribes of Israel, would leave memorials of his deeds on sculptured slabs or votive bulls. A long and minute account of this expedition is contained in the Annals of Sennacherib, a translation of which has recently been made into English, and, in his remarks upon it, Colonel Rawlinson says the Assyrian version confirms the most important features of the Scripture account. The Jewish and the Assyrian narratives of the campaign are, indeed, on the whole, strikingly illustrative of each other [OUTLINES OF ASSYRIAN HISTORY.]

**35, 36. AN ANGEL DESTROYS THE ASSYRIANS.** 35. **In the morning . . . they were all dead corpses**—It was the miraculous interposition of the Almighty that defended Jerusalem. As to the secondary agent employed in the destruction of the Assyrian army, it is most probable that it was effected by a hot south wind—the Simoom—such as to this day often envelops and destroys whole caravans. This conjecture is supported by *v.* 7, and Jeremiah, 51. 1. The destruction was during night; the officers and soldiers being in full security, were negligent; their discipline was relaxed; the camp-guards were not alert, or perhaps they themselves were the first taken off, and those who slept, *not wrapped up*, imbibed the poison plentifully. If this had been an evening of dissolute mirth (no uncommon thing in a camp) their joy (perhaps for a victory, or “the first night of their attacking the city,” says Josephus), became, by its effects, one means of their destruction. [CALMET’S FRAGMENT.] 36. **So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, went and returned**—The same way as he came (*v.* 33). The route is described (Isaiah, 10). The early chariot track near Beyrout is on the rocky edge of Lebanon, which is skirted by the ancient Lycus. [NAHR EL KELB.] On the perpendicular face of the limestone rock, at different heights, are seen slabs with Assyrian inscriptions, which, having been deciphered, are found to contain the name of Sennacherib. Thus, by the preservation of these tablets, the wrath of the Assyrian invaders is made to praise the Lord. **dwelt at Nineveh**—This statement implies a considerable period of time, and his annals carry on his history at least five years after his disastrous campaign at Jerusalem. No record of his catastrophe can be found, as the Assyrian practice was to record victories alone. The sculptures give only the sunny side of the picture.

**37. SENNACHERIB SLAIN.** 37. **As he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch**—Assaræ, or Asshur, the head of the Assyrian Pantheon, represented not as a vulture-headed figure—that is now ascertained to be a priest—but as a winged figure in a circle, which was the guardian deity of Assyria. The king is represented on the monuments standing or kneeling beneath this figure, his hand raised in sign of prayer or adoration. **his sons smote him with the sword**—Sennacherib’s temper, exasperated, probably, by his reverses, displayed itself in the most savage cruelty and intol-



erable tyranny over his subjects and slaves, till at length he was assassinated by his two sons, whom, it is said, he intended to sacrifice, to pacify the gods, and dispose them to grant him a return of prosperity. The parricides taking flight into Armenia, a third son, Esarhaddon, ascended the throne.

## CHAPTER XX.

**1-7. HEZEKIAH'S LIFE LENGTHENED.** 1. **In those days was Hezekiah sick**—As his reign lasted twenty-nine years (ch. 18. 2), and his kingdom was invaded in the fourteenth (ch. 18. 13), it is evident that this sudden and severe illness must have occurred in the very year of the Syrian invasion. Between the threatened attack and the actual appearance of the enemy, this incident in Hezekiah's history must have taken place. But according to the usage of the sacred historian, the story of Sennacherib is completed, before entering on what was personal to the king of Judah (see also Isaiah, 38. 39). **set thine house in order**—Isaiah, being of the blood-royal, might have access to the king's private house. But since the prophet was commissioned to make this announcement, the message must be considered as referring to matters of higher importance than the settlement of the king's domestic and private affairs. It must have related chiefly to the state of his kingdom, he having not as yet any son (Cf. v. 6 with ch. 21. 1). **for thou shalt die, and not live**—The disease was of a malignant character, and would be mortal in its effects, unless the healing power of God should miraculously interpose. 2. **he turned his face to the wall**—Not like Ahab (1 Kings, 21. 4), in fretful discontent, but in order to secure a better opportunity for prayer. 3. **remember now how I have walked before Thee, &c.**—The course of Hezekiah's thoughts was evidently directed to the promise made to David and his successors on the throne (1 Kings, 8. 25). He had kept the conditions as faithfully as human infirmity admitted, and as he had been all along free from any of those great crimes by which, through the judgment of God, human life was often suddenly cut short, his great grief might arise partly from the love of life, partly from the obscurity of the Mosaic dispensation where life and immortality had not been fully brought to light, and partly from his plans for the reformation of his kingdom being frustrated by his death. He pleaded the fulfillment of the promise. 4. **afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court**—Of the royal castle. 5. **Thus saith . . . the God of David thy father**—An immediate answer was given to his prayer, containing an assurance that the Lord was mindful of his promise to David, and would accomplish it in Hezekiah's experience both by the prolongation of his life and his deliverance from the Assyrians. **on the third day**—The perfect recovery from a dangerous sickness, within so short a time, shows the miraculous character of the cure (see his thanksgiving song, Isaiah, 38. 9). The disease cannot be ascertained; but the text gives no hint that the plague was raging then in Jerusalem; and although Arab physicians apply a cala-

plasm of figs to plague boils, they also do so in other cases, as figs are considered useful in ripening and soothing inflammatory ulcers.

**8-II. THE SUN GOES TEN DEGREES BACKWARD.** 8. **Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What will be the sign that the Lord shall heal me** — His recovery in the course of nature was so unlooked for, that the king asked for some token to justify his reliance on the truth of the prophet's communication; and the sign he specified was granted to him. The shadow of the sun went back upon the dial of Ahaz, the ten degrees it had gone down. Various conjectures have been formed as to this dial. The word in the original is "degrees," or "steps;" and hence many commentators have supposed that it was a stair, so artfully contrived, that the shadow on the steps indicated the hours and course of the sun. But it is more probable that it was a proper instrument, and, from the Hebrews having no term to designate it, that it was one of the foreign novelties imported from Babylon by Ahaz. It seems to have been of such magnitude, and so placed in the court, that Isaiah could point to it, and the king see it, from his chamber. The retrogression of the sun's shadow on the dial was miraculous, accomplished by the omnipotent power of God; but the phenomenon was temporary, local, confined to the notice, and intended for the satisfaction only of Hezekiah and his court. 12-19. **Berodach-baladan** — (Isaiah, 39). The first king of Babylon mentioned in sacred history; formerly its rulers were viceroys of the Assyrian monarchs. This individual threw off the yoke, and, asserting his independence, made, with varying success, a long and obstinate resistance. [RAWLINSON'S OUTLINES.] The message of congratulation to Hezekiah was, in all likelihood, accompanied with proposals for a defensive alliance against their common Assyrian enemy. The king of Judah, flattered with this honour, showed the ambassadors all his treasures, his armoury and warlike stores; and his motive for this was evidently, that the Babylonian deputies might be the more induced to prize his friendship. **the silver and the gold** — He paid so much tribute to Sennacherib as exhausted his treasury (ch. 18. 16). But, after the destruction of Sennacherib, presents were brought him from various quarters, out of respect to a king who, by his faith and prayer, saved his country; and besides, it is by no means improbable that, from the corpses in the Assyrian camp, all the gold and silver he had paid might be recovered. The vain display, however, was offensive to his Divine liege-lord who sent Isaiah to reprove him. The answer he gave the prophet (*v.* 14) shows how he was elated at the compliment of their visit; but it was wrong, as presenting a bait for the cupidity of these rapacious foreigners, who, at no distant period, would return and pillage his country, and transfer all the possessions he ostentatiously displayed to Babylon, as well as his posterity to be court attendants in that country — (see 2 Chronicles, 32. 31). 19. **Good is the word of the Lord** — indicating an humble and pious resignation to the Divine will. The concluding part of his reply was uttered after a pause, and was probably an ejaculation to himself, expressing his thankfulness, that, though

great afflictions should befall his descendants, the execution of the Divine judgment was to be suspended during his own life. **20. pool and a conduit**—(see 2 Chronicles, 32. 30).

## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-18. MANASSEH'S WICKED REIGN, AND GREAT IDOLATRY. 1. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign**—He must have been born three years after his father's recovery; and his minority, spent under the influence of guardians who were hostile to the religious principles and reforming policy of his father, may account in part for the anti-theocratic principles of his reign. The work of religious reformation which Hezekiah had zealously carried on was but partially accomplished. There was little appearance of its influence on the heart and manners of the people at large. On the contrary, the true fear of God had vanished from the mass of the people; corruption and vice increased, and were openly practiced (Isaiah, 28. 7, &c.) by the degenerate leaders, who, having got the young prince Manasseh into their power, directed his education, trained him up in their views, and seduced him into the open patronage of idolatry. Hence, when he became sovereign, he introduced the worship of idols, the restoration of high places, and the erection of altars or pillars to Baal, and the placing, in the temple of God itself a graven image of Asherah, the sacred or symbolic tree, which represented "all the host of heaven." This was not idolatry, but pure star worship, of Chaldaic and Assyrian origin. [KEIL.] The sun, as among the Persians, had chariots and horses consecrated to it (ch. 23. 11), and incense was offered to the stars on the house-tops (ch. 23. 12; 2 Chronicles, 33. 5; Jeremiah, 19. 13; Zephaniah, 1. 5), and in the temple area with the face turned toward the sunrise (Ezekiel, 8. 16). **5. the two courts of the house of the Lord**—The court of the priests and the large court of the people. **6. Made his son pass through the fire**—(See ch. 16. 3). **observed times**—From an observation of the clouds. **used enchantments**—Jugglery and spells. **dealt with familiar spirits**—Sept., ventriloquists, who pretended to ask counsel of a familiar spirit, and gave the response received from him to others. **and wizards**—Wise or knowing ones, who pretended to reveal secrets, to recover things lost, and hidden treasure, and interpret dreams. A great influx of these impostors had, at various times, poured from Chaldea into the land of Israel to pursue their gainful occupations, especially during the reigns of the latter kings; and Manasseh was not only their liberal patron but zealous to appear himself an adept in the arts. He raised them to be an influential class at his court, as they were in those of Assyria and Babylon, where nothing was done till they had ascertained the lucky hour and promised a happy issue. **7. And he set a graven image**—The placing of the Asherah within the precincts of the temple, which was dedicated to the worship of the true God, is dwelt upon as the most aggravated outrage of the royal idolater. **8. Neither will I make the feet of Israel move...**

**out of the land which I gave their fathers** — Alluding to the promise (2 Samuel, 7. 10). **only if they will observe, &c.** — This condition was expressed from the first plantation of Israel in Canaan. But that people not only did not keep it, but through the pernicious influence of Manasseh were seduced into greater excesses of idolatrous corruption than even the original Canaanites. 10-17. **the Lord spake by his servants the prophets** — These were Hoshea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk and Isaiah. Their counsels, admonitions and prophetic warnings were put on record in the national chronicles (2 Chronicles, 33. 18), and now form part of the sacred canon. 12. **Whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle** — A strong metaphorical form of announcing an extraordinary and appalling event (see 1 Samuel, 3. 11; Jeremiah, 19. 3; also Habakkuk, 1. 5). 13. **The line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab** — Captives doomed to destruction were sometimes grouped together and marked off by means of a measuring line and plummet (2 Samuel, 8. 2; Isaiah, 34. 11; Amos, 7. 7); "so that the line of Samaria means the line drawn for the destruction of Samaria; the plummet of the house of Ahab, for exterminating his apostate family; and the import of the threatening declaration here is, that Judah would be utterly destroyed, as Samaria and the dynasty of Ahab had been." **I will wipe Jerusalem, &c.** — The same doom is denounced more strongly in a figure unmistakably significant. 14. **I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance** — The people of Judah who of all the chosen people alone remained. The consequence of the Lord's forsaking them would be their fall into the power of their enemies. 16. **Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood** — Not content with the patronage and the practice of idolatrous abominations, he was a cruel persecutor of all who did not conform. The land was deluged with the blood of good men; among whom, it is traditionally said, Isaiah suffered a horrid death, by being sawn asunder (see Hebrews, 11. 37).

19-26. AMON'S WICKED REIGN. 18. **Amon, his son, reigned in his stead** — This prince continued the idolatrous policy of his father; and, after an inglorious reign of two years, was massacred by some of his own domestics. The people slew the regicide conspirators and placed his son Josiah on the throne.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1, 2. **JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN.** 1. **Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign** — Happier than his grandfather, Manasseh, he seems to have fallen, during his minority, under the care of better guardians who trained him in the principles and practice of piety; and so strongly had his young affections been enlisted on the side of true and undefiled religion, that he continued to adhere all his life, with undeviating perseverance, to the cause of God and righteousness.

3-7. **HE PROVIDES FOR THE REPAIR OF THE TEMPLE.** — 3. **in the eighteenth year of king Josiah** — Previous to this period he had commenced the work of national reformation. The preliminary

steps had been already taken, not only the builders were employed, but money had been brought by all the people and received by the Levites at the door, and various other preparations had been made. But the course of this narrative turns on one interesting incident which happened in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, and hence that date is specified. In fact, the whole land was thoroughly purified from every object and all traces of idolatry. The king now addressed himself to the repair and embellishment of the temple and gave directions to Hilkiah, the high priest, to take a general survey, in order to ascertain what was necessary to be done (see 2 Chronicles, 34. 8-15).

**8-14. HILKIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW.** 8. **Hilkiah said . . . I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, &c.** — *i. e.*, the law of Moses, the Pentateuch. It was the temple copy—which, having been laid (Deuteronomy, 31. 25, 26) beside the ark in the most holy place, and during the ungodly reigns of Manasseh and Amon—perhaps under Ahaz, when the temple itself had been profaned by idols, and the ark also (2 Chronicles, 35. 3) removed from its site—was somehow lost, and was now found again during the repair of the temple. [KEIL.] Delivered by Hilkiah the discoverer to Shaphan the scribe, it was, by the latter, shown and read to the king. It is thought, with great probability, that the passage read to the king, and by which the royal mind was so greatly excited, was a portion of Deuteronomy, the 28th, 29th and 30th chapters, in which is recorded a renewal of the national covenant, and an enumeration of the terrible threats and curses denounced against all who violated the law, whether prince or people. The impressions of grief and terror which the reading produced on the mind of Josiah have seemed to many unaccountable. But, as it is certain from the extensive and familiar knowledge displayed by the prophets, that there were numbers of other copies in popular circulation, the king must have known its sacred contents in some degree. But he might have been a stranger to the passage read him, or the reading of it might, in the peculiar circumstances, have found a way to his heart in a manner that he never felt before. His strong faith in the Divine word, and his painful consciousness that the woeful and long continued apostacies of the nation had exposed them to the infliction of the judgments denounced, must have come with overwhelming force on the heart of so pious a prince. **12-15. the king commanded . . . go, inquire of the Lord for me, &c.** — The agitated feelings of the king, prompted him to ask immediate counsel how to avert those curses under which his kingdom lay; and, forthwith, a deputation of his principal officers was sent to one endowed with the prophetic spirit. Ahikam, a friend of Jeremiah (Jeremiah, 26. 24). **Achbor**—or Abdon (2 Chronicles, 34. 20), a man of influence at court (Jeremiah, 26. 22). The occasion was urgent, and, therefore, they were sent—not to Zephaniah (Zephaniah, I. 1), who was perhaps young, nor to Jeremiah who was probably absent at his house in Anathoth, but to one who was at hand and known for her prophetic gifts—to Huldah, who was probably at this time a widow. Her husband, Shallum, was

grandson of one Harhas, "keeper of the wardrobe." If this means the priestly wardrobe, he must have been a Levite; but it probably refers to the royal wardrobe. **she dwelt . . . in the college** — Rather in *the Mishnah*, taking the original word as a proper name, not a school or college, but a particular suburb of Jerusalem. She was held in such veneration that Jewish writers say, she and Jehoiada the priest were the only persons, not of the house of David (2 Chronicles, 24. 16), who were ever buried in Jerusalem. 15. **she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you** — On being consulted, she delivered an oracular response in which judgment was blended with mercy; for it announced the impending calamities that, at no distant period, were to overtake the city and its inhabitants, but, at the same time, consoled the king with an assurance that this season of punishment and sorrow should not be during his life-time, on account of the faith, penitence and pious zeal for the Divine glory and worship which, in his public capacity, and with his royal influence, he had displayed.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1-3. **JOSIAH CAUSES THE LAW TO BE READ.** 1. **The king sent and gathered all the elders** — This pious and patriotic king, not content with the promise of his own security, felt, after Huldah's response, an increased desire to avert the threatened calamities from his kingdom and people. Knowing the richness of the Divine clemency and grace to the penitent, he convened the elders of the people, and placing himself at their head, accompanied by the collective body of the inhabitants, went in solemn procession to the temple, where he ordered the book of the law to be read to the assembled audience, and covenanted, with the unanimous concurrence of his subjects, to adhere steadfastly to all the commandments of the Lord. It was an occasion of solemn interest, closely connected with a great national crisis, and the beautiful example of piety in the highest quarter would exert a salutary influence over all classes of the people in animating their devotions and encouraging their return to the faith of their fathers. 2. **he read in their ears** — *i. e.*, caused to be read. 3. **all the people stood to the covenant** — *i. e.*, they agreed to the proposals made; they assented to what was required of them.

4-28. **HE DESTROYS IDOLATRY.** 4. **The king commanded Hilkiah, &c.** — *i. e.*, the high priest and other priests, for there were not a variety of official gradations in the temple. **all the vessels, &c.** — the whole apparatus of idol worship. **buried them without Jerusalem** — The law required them to be consigned to the flames (Deuteronomy, 7. 26). **in the fields of Kidron** — Most probably that part of the valley of Kidron, where lies Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. It is a level, spacious basin, abounding at present with plantations. [ROBINSON.] The brook winds along the east and south of the city, the channel of which is, throughout a large portion of the year, almost or wholly dry, except after heavy

rains, when it suddenly swells and overflows. There was emptied all the impurities of the temple (2 Chronicles, 29. 15. 16) and the city. His reforming predecessors had ordered the mutilated relics of idolatry to be thrown into that receptacle of filth (1 Kings, 15. 13; 2 Chronicles, 15. 16; 30. 14), but Josiah, while he imitated their piety, far outstripped them in zeal; for he caused the ashes of the burnt wood, and the fragments of the broken metal to be collected and conveyed to Bethel, in order thenceforth to associate ideas of horror and aversion with that place, as odious for the worst pollutions. 5. **put down the idolatrous priests**—*Heb.*, Chemarim, "scorched," *i. e.*, Guebres, or fire-worshippers, distinguished by a girdle (Ezekiel, 23. 14-17) or belt of wool and camel's hair, twisted round the body twice, and tied with four knots, which had a symbolic meaning, and made it a defense against evil. **them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, &c.**—or Baal-Shemesh—for Baal was sometimes considered the sun. This form of false worship was not by images, but pure star-worship, borrowed from the old Assyrians. **and**—Rather, *even* to all the host of heaven. 6. **brought out the grove**—*i. e.*, Asherah, the mystic tree, placed by Manasseh in the temple, removed by him after his conversion, and replaced in the sanctuary by his wicked son Amon. Josiah had it taken to Kidron, burnt the wood, ground the metal about it to powder, and strewed the ashes "on the graves of the children of the people." The poor were buried in a common on part of the valley of Kidron. But reference is here made to the graves "of those that had sacrificed" (2 Chronicles, 34. 4). 7. **break down the houses of the Sodomites**—not solid houses, but tents, called elsewhere Succoth-benoth, the booths of the young women who were devoted to the service of Asherah, for which they made embroidered hangings, and in which they gave themselves to unbridled revelry and lust. Or, the hangings might be for Asherah itself, as it is a popular superstition in the East to hang pieces of cloth on trees. 8. **he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places, &c.**—Numbers of the Levitical order, finding in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon the temple worship abolished, and the tithes and other offerings alienated, had been betrayed into the folly of officiating on high places, and presenting such sacrifices as were brought to them. These irregularities, even though the object of that worship was the true God, were prohibited in the law (Deuteronomy, 12. 11). Those who had been guilty of this sin Josiah brought to Jerusalem, and, regarding them as defiled, debarred them from the service of the temple, but gave them an allowance out of the temple revenues, like the lame and disabled members of the priesthood (Leviticus; 21. 21, 22). **from Geba to Beer-sheba**—the most northern and the most southern places in Judah—meaning all parts of the kingdom. **the high places . . . which were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua**—The governor's house and gate were on the left of the city gate, and close by the entrance of that civic mansion-house were public altars, dedicated, it might be, to the true God, but contrary to his own ordinance of worship (Isaiah, 57. 8).

10. **Topheth**—so called from Toph—a drum—the prevailing opinion among Jewish writers being that the cries of the terrified children made to pass through the fire in that place of idolatrous horror were drowned by the sound of that instrument. 11. **took away the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun**—among the people who anciently worshipped the sun, horses were usually dedicated to that divinity, from the supposed idea that the sun himself was drawn in a chariot by horses. In some cases these horses were sacrificed; but more commonly they were employed either in the sacred processions to carry the images of the sun, or for the worshippers to ride in every morning to welcome his rise. It seems that the idolatrous kings, Ahaz, Manasseh and Amon, or their great officers, proceeded on these horses early on each day from the east gate of the temple to salute and worship the sun at his appearing above the horizon. 12. **the altars that were on the top of the upper chambers of Ahaz**—altars were reared on the flat roofs of houses where the worshippers of “the host of heaven” burnt incense (Zephaniah, I. 5; Jeremiah, 19. 13). Ahaz had reared altars for this purpose on the *oleah*, or upper chamber of his palace, and Manasseh on some portion of the roof of the temple. Josiah demolished both of these structures. 13. **the high places . . . which Solomon had builded**—(see I Kings, II. 7). **the right hand of the Mount of Corruption**—The Mount of Olives is a hilly range on the east of Jerusalem. This range has three summits, of which the central one is the mount of Corruption, so called from the idol temples built there, and of course the hill on the right hand denotes the southernmost peak. Josiah is said not to have destroyed, but only defiled “the high places on the hill of Corruption.” It is most probable that Hezekiah had long before demolished the idolatrous temples erected there by Solomon; but as the superstitious people continued to regard the spot as consecrated ground, Josiah defiled it. 14. **filled their places with the bones of men**—Every monument of idolatry in his dominions he in like manner destroyed, and the places where they stood he defiled by strewing them with dead men’s bones. The presence of a dead carcass rendered both persons and places unclean in the eyes both of Jews and heathens. 15-20. **Moreover, the altar that was at Bethel, &c.**—Not satisfied with the removal of every vestige of idolatry from his own dominions, this zealous iconoclast made a tour of inspection through the cities of Samaria and all the territory formerly occupied by the ten tribes, destroying the altars and temples of the high places, consigning the Asherim to the flames, putting to death the priests of the high places and showing his horror at idolatry by ransacking the sepulchers of idolatrous priests and strewing the burnt ashes of their bones upon the altars before he demolished them. **according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, &c.**—In carrying on these proceedings Josiah was prompted by his own intense hatred of idolatry. But it is remarkable that this act was predicted 326 years before his birth, and his name, also, was expressly mentioned as well as the very place where it should be done (I Kings, 13. 2). This is one of the most remarkable



prophecies contained in the Bible. 17. **What title is that that I see?**—The king's attention, it is probable, had been arrested by a tomb-stone more conspicuous than the rest around it, bearing on an inscription the name of him that lay beneath: and this prompted his curiosity to make the inquiry. **the men of the city**—not the Assyrian colonists—for they could know nothing about the ancient transactions of the place, but some of the old people who had been allowed to remain, and, perhaps, the tomb itself might not then have been discoverable, through the effects of time and neglect, had not some "Old Mortality" garnished the sepulcher of the righteous. 21-23. **the king commanded all the people, saving, Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, &c.**—It was observed with great solemnity and was attended not only by his own subjects but by the remnant people from Israel (see 2 Chronicles, 35. 1-19). Many of the Israelites who were at Jerusalem might have *heard of* if they did *not hear* the law read by Josiah. It is probable that they might even have got a copy of the law stimulated, as they were, to the better observance of Jehovah's worship by the unusual and solemn transactions at Jerusalem. 26. **Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath, &c.**—The national reformation which Josiah carried on was acquiesced in by the people from submission to the royal will; but they entertained a secret and strong hankering after the suppressed idolatries. Though outwardly purified, their hearts were not right toward God, as appears from many passages of the prophetic writings; their thorough reform was hopeless; and God, who saw no sign of genuine repentance, allowed his decree (ch. 21. 12-15), for the subversion of the kingdom to take fatal effect. 29. **In his days Pharaoh-nechoh**—(see 2 Chronicles, 35. 20-27).

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**1-7. JEHOIAKIM PROCURES HIS OWN RUIN. 1. Nebuchadnezzar**—The son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Chaldee monarchy. This invasion took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (Jeremiah, 25. 1; Cf. 46. 2). The young king of Assyria being probably detained at home on account of his father's demise, dispatched, along with the Chaldean troops on his border, an army composed of the tributary nations that were contiguous to Judea, to chastise Jehoiakim's revolt from his yoke. But this hostile band was only an instrument in executing the Divine judgment (*v.* 2) denounced by the prophets against Judah for the sins of the people; and hence, though marching by the orders of the Assyrian monarch, they are described as sent by the Lord (*v.* 3). **2. the Lord would not pardon**—(see ch. 23. 26; Jeremiah, 15. 1). **6. Jehoiakim slept with his fathers**—This phraseology can mean nothing more than that he died; for he was not buried with his royal ancestors; and whether he fell in battle, or his body was subjected to posthumous insults, he was, according to the prediction (Jeremiah, 22. 19), not honoured

with the rites of sepulture (Jeremiah, 36. 30). **Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead**—The very brief reign of this prince which lasted only three months, during which he was an humble vassal of the Assyrians, is scarcely deserving to be taken into account, and therefore is no way contradictory to the prophetic menace denounced against his father (Jeremiah, 36. 30). **7. the king of Egypt**—*i. e.*, Pharaoh-nechoh.

**8, 9. JEHOIACHIN SUCCEEDS HIM.** **8. Jehoiachin**—*i. e.*, *God appointed*, contracted into *Jeconiah* an *Coniah* (Jeremiah, 22. 24). **eighteen years old when he began to reign**—At the age of eight his father took him into partnership in the government. (2 Chronicles, 36. 9). He began to reign alone at eighteen. **9. he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord**—Untaught by experience, and deaf to the prophetic warnings, he pursued the evil courses which had brought so many disasters upon the royal family, as well as the people of Judah. This bad character is figuratively but strongly depicted (Ezekiel, 19. 5-7).

**10-16. JERUSALEM TAKEN.** **10. at that time**—Within three months after his accession to the throne; it was the spring of the year (2 Chronicles, 36. 10); so early did he indicate a feeling hostile to the interests of his Assyrian liege-lord by forming a league with Egypt. Nebuchadrezzar sent his generals to besiege Jerusalem, as Jeremiah had foretold (22. 18; 24. 30), and soon after followed in person. Convinced of the hopelessness of making any effectual resistance, Jehoiachin, going to the camp of the besiegers, surrendered (*v.* 12), in the expectation, probably, of being allowed to retain his throne as a vassal of the Assyrian empire. But Nebuchadrezzar's clemency toward the kings of Judah was now exhausted; so that Jehoiachin was sent as a captive to Babylon, according to Jeremiah's prediction (22. 24), accompanied by the queen-mother (the same who had held that dignity under Jehoahaz, ch. 23. 31), his generals and officers. This happened in the eighth year of Nebuchadrezzar's reign, computing from the time when he was associated with his father in the government. Those that were left consisted chiefly of the poorer sort of people, and the unskilled workmen. The palace and the temple were ransacked. The smaller golden vessels had been taken on the first capture of Jerusalem, and placed by Nebuchadrezzar in the temple of his god as tokens of victory, and used by Belshazzar at his impious feast, for the purpose of rewarding his army with these trophies, among which were probably the golden candlesticks, ark, &c. (Cf. 2 Chronicles, 36. 7; Daniel, 1. 2). Now the gold plating was torn off all the larger temple furniture. **13. as the Lord had said**—(Cf. ch. 20. 17; Isaiah, 39. 6; Jeremiah, 15. 13; 17. 3). The *elite* of the nation for rank, usefulness, and moral worth, all who might be useful in Babylon or dangerous in Palestine, were carried off to Babylon, to the number of ten thousand (*v.* 14). These are specified (*v.* 15, 16), warriors, 7,000; craftsmen and smiths, 1,000; king's wives, officers and princes, also priests and prophets (Jeremiah, 29. 1; Ezekiel, 1. 1), 2,000; equal to 10,000 captives in all.

**17-20. ZEDEKIAH'S EVIL REIGN.** **17. the king of Babylon made**

**Mattaniah, his father's brother, king in his stead** — Adhering to his former policy of maintaining a show of monarchy, Nebuchadnezzar appointed the third and youngest son of Josiah (1 Chronicles, 3. 15), full brother of Jehoahaz and uncle of the captive Jehoiachin. But according to the custom of conquerors, who changed the names of the great men they took captives in war, in token of their supremacy, he gave him the new name of Zedekiah, *i. e.*, "The righteousness of God." This being a purely Hebrew name, it seems that he allowed the puppet king to choose his own name which was confirmed. His heart toward God was the same as that of Jehoiakin, impenitent and heedless of God's word. 20. **through the anger of the Lord . . . he cast them out of his presence** — *i. e.*, in the course of God's righteous providence, his policy, as king, would prove ruinous to his country. **Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon** — Instigated by ambassadors from the neighbouring states who came to congratulate him on his accession to the throne (Cf. Jeremiah, 17. 3, with 28. 1), and, at the same time, get him to join them in a common league to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Though warned by Jeremiah against this step the infatuated and perjured (Ezekiel, 17. 13) Zedekiah persisted in his revolt.

## CHAPTER XXV.

**1-3. JERUSALEM AGAIN BESIEGED. I. Nebuchadnezzar . . . came . . . against Jerusalem and pitched against it** — Incensed by the revolt of Zedekiah, the Assyrian despot determined to put an end to the perfidious and inconstant monarchy of Judea. This chapter narrates his third and last invasion, which he conducted in person at the head of an immense army, levied out of all the tributary nations under his sway. Having overrun the northern parts of the country and taken almost all the fenced cities (Jeremiah, 34. 7), he marched direct to Jerusalem to invest it. The date of the beginning as well as of the end of the siege is here carefully marked (Cf. Ezekiel, 24. 1; Jeremiah, 39. 1; 52. 4-6); from which it appears that, with a brief interruption caused by Nebuchadnezzar's marching to oppose the Egyptians who were coming to its relief, but who retreated without fighting, the siege lasted a year and a half. So long a resistance was owing, not to the superior skill and valour of the Jewish soldiers, but to the strength of the city fortifications on which the king too confidently relied (Cf. Jeremiah, 21; 37; 38). **pitched against it, and . . . built forts** — Rather, perhaps, drew lines of circumvallation, with a ditch to prevent any going out of the city. On this rampart were erected his military engines for throwing missiles into the city. 3. **on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed** — In consequence of the close and protracted blockade, the inhabitants were reduced to dreadful extremities; and, under the maddening influence of hunger, the most inhuman atrocities were perpetrated (Lamentations, 2. 20, 22; 4. 9, 10; Ezekiel, 5. 10.) This was a fulfillment of the prophetic denunciations

threatened on the apostasy of the chosen people (Leviticus, 26. 29. Deuteronomy, 28. 53-57; Jeremiah, 15. 2; 27. 13; Ezekiel, 4. 16).

**4-30. ZEDEKIAH TAKEN.** 4. **The city was broken up**—*i. e.*, a breach was effected, as we are elsewhere informed, in a part of the wall belonging to the lower city (2 Chronicles, 32. 5; 33. 14). **the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden**—The king's garden was (Nehemiah. 3. 15) at the Pool of Siloam, *i. e.*, at the mouth of the Tyropæon. A trace of the outermost of these two walls appears to be still extant in the rude pathway which crosses the mouth of the Tyropæon, on a mound hard by the old mulberry tree, which marks the traditional spot of Isaiah's martyrdom. [ROBINSON.] It is probable that the besiegers had overlooked this pass. **the king went . . . toward the plain**—*i. e.*, the Ghor, or valley of Jordan, estimated at five hours' distance from Jerusalem. The plain near Jericho is about eleven or twelve miles broad. 6. **They took the king and brought him . . . to Riblah**—Nebuchadnezzar, having gone from the siege to oppose the auxiliary forces of Pharaoh-Hophra, left his generals to carry on the blockade, he himself not returning to the scene of action, but taking up his station at Riblah in the land of Hamath (ch. 23. 33). **they gave judgment upon him**—They, *i. e.*, the council (Jeremiah, 39. 3. 13; Daniel, 6. 7, 8, 12), regarding him as a seditious and rebellious vassal, condemned him for violating his oath, and neglecting the announcement of the Divine will as made known to him by Jeremiah (Cf. Jeremiah, 32. 5; 34. 2; 38. 17). His sons and the nobles who had joined in his flight were slain before his eyes (Jeremiah, 39. 6; 52. 10). In conformity with Eastern notions, which consider a blind man incapable of ruling, his eyes were put out, and, being put in chains, he was carried to perpetual imprisonment in Babylon (Jeremiah, 52. 11), which, though he came to it, as Ezekiel had foretold, he did not see (Jeremiah, 32. 5; Ezekiel, 12. 13; 17. 16). 8-18. **On the seventh day of the month . . . came Nebuzar-adan**—(Cf. Jeremiah, 52. 12). In attempting to reconcile these two passages, it must be supposed either that, though he had set out on the 7th, he did not arrive in Jerusalem till the 10th, or that he did not put his orders in execution till that day. His office as captain of the guard (Genesis, 37. 36; 39. 1) called him to execute the awards of justice on criminals; and hence, although not engaged in the siege of Jerusalem (Jeremiah, 39. 13), Nebuzar-adan was dispatched to raze the city, to plunder the temple, to lay both in ruins, demolish the fortifications, and transport the inhabitants to Babylon. The most eminent of these were taken to the king at Riblah (*v.* 27), and executed, as instigators and abettors of the rebellion, or otherwise obnoxious to the Assyrian government. In their number were Seraiah the high priest, grandfather of Ezra (Ezra, 7. 1), his Sagan or deputy, a priest of the second order (Jeremiah, 21. 2; 29. 25, 29; 37. 3). **the three keepers of the door**—not mere porters, but officers of high trust among the Levites (ch. 22. 4; 1 Chronicles, 9. 26). 19. **Five men of them that were in the king's presence**—*i. e.*, who belonged to the royal retinue; it is probable that there were five at first, and that the other two were

found afterward (Jeremiah, 52. 25). 22-26. **Nebuchadnezzar . . . made Gedaliah ruler**—The people permitted to remain were, besides the king's daughters, a few court attendants and others (Jeremiah, 40. 7), too insignificant to be removed, only the peasantry who could till the land and dress the vineyards. Gedaliah was Jeremiah's friend (Jeremiah, 26. 24), and having, by the prophet's counsel, probably fled from the city as abandoned of God, he surrendered himself to the conqueror (Jeremiah, 38. 2, 17), and, being promoted to the government of Judea, fixed his provincial court at Mizpah. He was well qualified to surmount the difficulties of ruling at such a crisis. Many of the fugitive Jews, as well as the soldiers of Zedekiah who had accompanied the king in his flight to the plains of Jericho, left their retreats (Jeremiah, 40. 11, 12), and flocked around the governor, who, having counseled them to submit, promised them, on complying with this condition, security on oath, that they would retain their possessions and enjoy the produce of their land (Jeremiah, 40. 9). 25. **Ishmael . . . of the seed royal came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah**—He had found refuge with Baalis, king of the Ammonites, and he returned with a bad design, being either instigated by envy of a governor not descended from the house of David, or bribed by Baalis to murder Gedaliah. The generous governor, though apprized of his intentions, refused to credit the report, much less to sanction the proposal made by an attached friend to cut off Ishmael. The consequence was, that he was murdered by this same Ishmael, when entertaining him in his own house (Jeremiah, 41. 1). 26. **and all the people came to Egypt**—in spite of Jeremiah's dissuasions (Jeremiah, 43. 7, 8), and settled in various cities of that country (Jeremiah, 44. 1). 27. **seven and twentieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin**—corresponding with the year of Nebuchadnezzar's death, and his son Evil-merodach's ascension to the throne. **Evil-merodach did lift up the head of Jehoiachin, and spake kindly**—gave him liberty upon *parole*. This kindly feeling is said to have originated in a familiar acquaintance formed in prison, in which Evil-merodach had lain till his father's death, on account of some malversation while acting as regent during Nebuchadnezzar's seven years' illness (Daniel, 4. 32, 33). But doubtless the improvement in Hezekiah's condition is to be traced to the overruling providence and grace of Him who still cherished purposes of love to the house of David (2 Samuel, 7. 14, 15). 29. **he ate continually before him**—*i. e.*, according to an ancient usage in Eastern courts, had a seat at the royal table on great days, and had a stated provision granted him for the maintenance of his exiled court.

THE FIRST BOOK  
OF  
THE CHRONICLES.

CHAPTER I.

**1-3. ADAM'S LINE TO NOAH.** 1. **Adam, &c.** — "Begot" must be understood. Only that one member of the family is mentioned, who came in the direct order of succession. 4-23. **Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth** — The three sons of this patriarch are enumerated, partly because they were the founders of the new world, and partly because the fulfilment of Noah's prophecy (Genesis, 9. 25-27) could not otherwise appear to have been verified. 12. **Casluhim (of whom came the Philistines) and Caphtorim** — Better rendered "And Casluhim, of whom came the Philistim and Caphtorim;" they were brethren, the sons of Casluhim, and at first dwelt together, whence their names are used interchangeably; and the Caphtorim are described as inhabiting Azzah, or Gaza, the seat of the Philistines. 14. **the Jebusites, &c.** — from this verse to v. 17, the names are not those of individuals, but of people who all sprang from Canaan; and as several of them became extinct or were amalgamated with their brethren, their national appellations are given instead of the personal names of their ancestors. 17. **Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech** — Or Mash; these were the children of Aram, and *grandsons* of Shem (Genesis, 10. 23). 18. **Arphaxad begat Selah** — Cainan, the father's name, is omitted here. (see Luke, 3. 36). 19. **Peleg** — (see Genesis, 10. 25). 22. **Ebal** — Or Obal (Genesis, 10. 28).

**24-28. SHEM'S LINE TO ABRAHAM.** 24. **Shem, &c.** — This comprises a list of ten, inclusive of Abraham.

**29-31. SONS OF ISHMAEL.** 29. **These are their generations** — The heads of his twelve tribes. The great northern desert of Arabia, including the entire neck, was colonized by these tribes; and if we can recover, in the modern geography of this part of the country, Arab tribes bearing the names of those patriarchs, *i. e.*, names corresponding with those preserved in the original catalogue of Scripture, we obtain at once so many evidences, not of mere similarity, but of absolute identification. [FORSTER.] **Nebaiotb** — Gave rise to the Nebathæns of the classic, and the *Beni Nabat* of Oriental writers. **Kedar** — The Arab tribe, El Khedeyre, on the coast of Hedgar. **Abdeel** — Abdilla, the name of a tribe in Yemen. 30. **Dumah** — Dumah and Tema, the great Arab tribes of Beni Teman. Thus this writer [HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ARABIA] traces the names of all the heads of the twelve tribes of Ishmael as perpetuated in the clans or tribes of the Arabs in the present day.

**32, 33. SONS OF KETURAH.** 32. **sons of Keturah** — These became founders of nomadic tribes in the north of Arabia and Syria, as Midian of the Midianites (Genesis, 36. 35; Judges, 6. 2). and **Shuah** — From whom Bildad sprang (Job, 2. 11).

**34-42. POSTERITY OF ABRAHAM BY ESAU.** 36. sons of **Eliphaz**—The tribe Adites, in the center county of the Saracens, so-called from his mother Adah (Genesis, 36. 10). **Teman**—Gave rise to the land of Teman, near the head of the Red Sea. **Omar**—The tribe Beni-Ammi, settled at the northern point of Djebel Shera (Mount Seir). **Zephi**—The tribe Dzafe. **Gatam**—Katam, inhabited by the tribe Al Saruat, or “people of Sarah.” **Kenaz**—The tribe Aenezes, a tribe whose settlement lies in the neighbourhood of Syria. **Amalek**—The Beni Malak of Zohran, and the Beni Maledj of the Shat el Arab. 37. **Reuel**—A powerful branch of the great Aeneze tribe, the *Rowalla* Arabs. **Shammah**—The great tribe Beni Shammar. In the same way the names of the other kings and dukes are traced in the modern tribes of Arabia. But it is unnecessary to mention any more of those obscure nomads, except to notice that Jobab (*v.* 44), one of the Kings of Edom, is considered to be Job, and that his seat was in the royal city of Dinahab (Genesis, 36. 32), identified with O'Daeb, a well-known town in the center of Al Dahna, a great northern desert in the direction of Chaldea and the Euphrates. [FORSTER.]

## CHAPTER II.

**1, 2. SONS OF ISRAEL.** **3-12. POSTERITY OF JUDAH.** 3. **The sons of Judah**—His descendants are enumerated first, because the right and privileges of the primogeniture had been transferred to him (Genesis, 49. 8), and because from his tribe the Messiah was to spring. 6. **Zimri and Ethan and Heman and Carcol and Dara**—These five are here stated to be the sons of Zerach, *i. e.*, of Ezra, whence they were called Ezrahites (1 Kings, 4. 31). In that passage they are called “the sons of Mahol,” which, however, is to be taken, not as a proper name, but appellatively for “sons of music, dancing,” &c. The traditional fame of their great sagacity and acquirements had descended to the time of Solomon, and formed a standard of comparison for showing the superior wisdom of that monarch. Jewish writers say that they were looked up to as prophets by their countrymen during the abode in Egypt. 7. **the sons of Carmi**—He was the son of Zimri, or Zabdi, as he is called (Joshua, 7. 1). **Achar**—or Achan (Joshua, 7. 1). This variety in the form of the name is, with great propriety, used here, since Achar means “troubler.”

**13-17. CHILDREN OF JESSE.** 15. **David the seventh**—As it appears (1 Samuel, 16. 10; 17. 12) that Jesse had eight sons, the presumption is from David being mentioned here as the seventh son of his father, that one of them had died at an early age, without leaving issue. 17. **Jether the Ishmaelite**—(Cf. 2 Samuel, 17. 25). In that passage he is called Ithra an Israelite; and there seems no reason why, in the early days of David, any one should be specially distinguished as an Israelite. The presumption is in favour of the reading followed by the Sept, which calls him “Jetra the Jezreelite.” The circumstance of his settling in another tribe, or of a woman marrying out of her own tribe, was sufficiently rare

and singular to call for the statement that Abigail was married to a man of Jezreel.

**18-55. POSTERITY OF CALEB. 18. Caleb the son of Hezron**—The notices concerning this person appear confused in our version. In *v.* 19 he is said to be father of Hur, whereas in *v.* 50 he is called “the son of Hur.” The words in this latter passage have been transposed in the copying, and should be read thus, “Hur the son of Caleb.” **begat children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth**—the former was his spouse, while Jerioth seems to have been a secondary wife, and the mother of the children whose names are here given. On the death of his principal wife, he married Ephrath, and by her had Hur. **21. of Hezron . . . daughter of Machir, father of Gilead**—*i. e.*, chief of that town, which with the lands adjacent was no doubt the property of Machir, who was so desirous of a male heir. He was grandson of Joseph. The wife of Machir was of the tribe of Manasseh (Numbers, 26. 29). **22. Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead**—As the son of Segub and the grandson of Hezron, he was of the tribe of Judah; but from his maternal descent he is called (Numbers, 32. 41; Deuteronomy, 3. 14) “the son of Manasseh.” This designation implies that his inheritance lay in that tribe in right of his grandmother; in other words, because his *maternal* and *adopting* great-grandfather was Machir the son of Manasseh; and Jair, inheriting his property, was his lineal representative; and, accordingly, this is expressly stated to be the case: for the village-group of “Havoth-Jair,” was awarded to him in that tribe, in consequence of his valiant and patriotic exploits. This arrangement, however, took place previous to the law (Numbers, 36), by which it was enacted that heiresses were to marry in their own tribe. But this instance of Jair shows that in the case of a man obtaining an inheritance in another tribe had required him to become thoroughly incorporated with it as a representative of the family through which the inheritance was received. He had been adopted into Manasseh, and it would never have been imagined that he was other than “a son of Manasseh” naturally, had not this passage given information supplementary to that of the passage in Numbers. 23. **He took**—Rather “he had taken.” This statement is accounting for his acquisition of so large a territory; he got it by right of conquest from the former possessors. **Kenath**—This place, along with its group of surrounding villages, was gained by Nobah, one of Jair’s officers, sent by him to capture it (Numbers, 32. 1, 2). **all these belonged to the sons of Machir**—In their number Jair is included as having completely identified himself by his marriage and residence in Gilead with the tribe of Manasseh. **24. Caleb-ephratah**—So called from uniting the names of husband and wife (*v.* 19), and supposed to be the same as was afterward called Bethlehem-ephratah. **Ashur, the father of Tekoa**—(2 Samuel, 14. 2-4). He is called the father, either from his being the first founder, or, perhaps, the ruler of the city. **34. Sheshan had no sons, but daughters**—Either he had no sons alive at his death, or his family consisted wholly of daughters, of whom Ahlai (*v.* 31) was one, she being specially mentioned on account



of the domestic relations about to be noticed. 35. **Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife**—The adoption and marriage of a foreign slave in the family where he is serving is far from being a rare or extraordinary occurrence in Eastern countries. It is thought, however, by some, to have been a connection not sanctioned by the law of Moses. [MICHAELIS.] But this is not a well-founded objection, as the history of the Jews furnishes not a few examples of foreign proselytes in the same manner obtaining an inheritance in Israel; and, doubtless, Jarha had previously embraced the Jewish faith in place of the groveling idolatries of his native Egypt. In such a case, therefore, there could be no legal difficulty. Being a foreign slave, he had no inheritance in a different tribe to injure by this connection; while his marriage with Sheshan's daughter led to his adoption into the tribe of Judah, as well as his becoming heir of the family property. 42. **The sons of Caleb**—(Cf. *v.* 18. 25). The sons here noticed were the fruit of his union with a third wife. 55. **The families of the scribes**—Either civil or ecclesiastical officers of the Kenite origin, who are here classed with the tribe of Judah, not as being descended from it, but as dwelling within its territory, and in a measure incorporated with its people. **Jabez**—A place in Judah (ch. 4. 9). **Kenites that came of Hemath**—Who settled in Judah, and were thus distinguished from another division of the Kenite clan which dwelt in Manasseh (Judges, 4. 11).

## CHAPTER III.

1-9. **SONS OF DAVID, 1-3. Now these were the sons of David which were born unto him in Hebron**—It is of consequence for the proper understanding of events in the domestic history of David, to bear in mind the place and time of his sons' birth. The eldest son, born *after* his father's *accession* to the sovereign authority, is, according to Eastern notions, the proper heir to the throne. And hence the natural aspirations of ambition in Amnon, who was long unaware of the alienation of the crown, and could not be easily reconciled to the claims of a younger brother being placed above his own (see 2 Samuel, 3. 1-5). 3. **Eglah his wife**—Supposed to be another name of Michal, who, though she had no son after her mockery of David for dancing before the ark, might have had one previous to that time. She has the title of wife appended to her name, because she was his proper wife: and the mention of her name last, probably arose from the circumstance that, having been withdrawn from David and married to another husband, but afterward restored, she had in reality become the last of his wives. 5. **four, of Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel**—Or Bathsheba (2 Samuel, 11. 3), and there her father is called Eliam. Of course Solomon was not her "only son," but he is called so (Proverbs, 4. 3) from the distinguished affection of which he was the object, and though the eldest, is named the last of Bathsheba's children. 6. **Elishama and Eliphelet**—Two sons of the same name are twice mentioned (*v.* 8). They were the children of different

mothers, and had probably some title or epithet appended by which the one was distinguished from the other. Or, it might be, that the former two were dead, and their names were given to sons afterward born to preserve their memories. 8. **nine**—The number of David's sons born after his removal to Jerusalem was eleven (2 Samuel, 5. 14), but only nine are mentioned here; two of them being omitted, either in consequence of their early deaths, or of their leaving no issue.

**10-16. HIS LINE TO ZEDEKIAH.** 10. **Solomon's son was Rehoboam, &c.**—David's line is here drawn down to the captivity, through a succession of good and bad, but still influential and celebrated monarchs. It has rarely happened that a crown has been transmitted from father to son, in lineal descent, for seventeen reigns. But this was the promised reward of David's piety. There is, indeed, observable some vacillation toward the close of this period—the crown passing from one brother to another, and even from uncle to nephew—a sure sign of disorderly times and a disjointed government. 15. **Zedekiah**—is called the *son* of Josiah (Cf. Jeremiah, 1. 3; 37. 1), but (2 Chronicles, 36. 19) he is described as the brother of Jehoiachin, who was the son of Jehoiachim and consequently the *grandson* of Josiah. Words expressive of affinity or relationship are used with great latitude in the Hebrew. **Shallum**—No king of this name is mentioned in the history of Josiah's sons (2 Kings, ch. 23. 14), but there is a notice of Shallum, the son of Josiah (Jeremiah, 22. 11), who reigned in the stead of his father, and who is generally supposed to be Jehoahaz, a younger son, here called the fourth, of Josiah.

**17-24. SUCCESSORS OF JECONIAH.** 17. **the sons of Jeconiah, Assir**—Rather, "Jeconiah the prisoner or captive." This record of his condition was added to show that Salathiel was born during the captivity in Babylon (Cf. Matthew, 1. 12). Jeconiah was written childless (Jeremiah, 22. 30), a prediction which (as the words that follow explain) meant that this unfortunate monarch should have no son succeeding him on the throne. 18. **Malchiram also**—As far as Jeconiah, every thing is plain; but there is reason to suspect that the text in the subsequent verses has been dislocated and disarranged. The object of the sacred historian is to trace the royal line through Zerubbabel—yet, according to the present reading, the genealogical stem cannot be drawn from Jeconiah downwards. The following arrangement of the text is given as removing all difficulty. [DAVIDSON'S HERM.] *v.* 17. And the sons of Jeconiah, the captive, Salathiel (Shealtiel, Ezra, 3. 2; Nehemiah, 12. 1; Haggai, 1. 12, 14; 2. 2), his son. *v.* 18. And the sons of Salathiel; Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, Hananiah and Shelomith their sister. *v.* 19. And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hezed. 20. And Malchiram, and Rephaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 21. The sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah and Jesiah; the sons of Rephaiah; his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, his son Shecaniah.

## CHAPTER IV.

**1-8. POSTERITY OF JUDAH BY CALEB THE SON OF HUR.** 1. **The sons of Judah** — *i. e.*, the descendants — for with the exception of Pharez, none of those here noticed were his immediate sons. Indeed, the others are mentioned solely to introduce the name of Shobal, whose genealogy the historian intended to trace (ch. 2. 52).

**9-20. OF JABEZ, AND HIS PRAYER.** 9. **Jabez** — Was, as many think, the son of Coz, or Kenaz, and is here eulogized for his sincere and fervent piety, as well, perhaps, as for some public and patriotic works which he performed. The Jewish writers affirm that he was an eminent doctor in the law — whose reputation drew so many scribes around him that a town was called by his name (ch. 2. 55); and to the piety of his character this passage bears ample testimony. The memory of the critical circumstances which marked his birth was perpetuated in his name (Cf. Genesis, 35. 15); and yet, in the development of his high talents, or distinguished worth in after-life, his mother must have found a satisfaction and delight that amply compensated for all her early trials. The prayer of his which is here recorded, and which, like Jacob's, is in the form of a vow (Genesis, 28. 20), seems to have been uttered when he was entering on an important or critical service; for the successful execution of which he placed confidence neither on his own nor his people's prowess, but looked anxiously for the aid and blessing of God. The enterprise was in all probability the expulsion of the Canaanites from the territory he occupied, and as this was a war of extermination, which God himself had commanded, His blessing could be the more reasonably asked and expected in preserving them from all the evils to which the undertaking might expose him. In the words, "that it may not grieve me," and which might be more literally rendered, "that I may have no more sorrow," there is an allusion to the meaning of his name — Jabez — signifying grief; and the import of this petition is, Let me not experience the grief which my name implies, and which my sins may well produce. **God granted him that which he requested** — Whatever was the kind of undertaking which roused his anxieties, Jabez enjoyed a remarkable degree of prosperity, and God, in his instance, proved that He was not only the hearer, but the answerer of prayer. 13. **the sons of Kenaz** — the grandfather of Caleb, who, from that relationship, is called a Kenezite (Numbers, 32. 12). 14. **Joab, the father of the valley of Carashim** — *lit.*, the father of the inhabitants of the valley — the valley of craftsmen, as the word denotes. They dwelt together, according to a custom which, independently of any law, extensively prevails in Eastern countries for persons of the same trade to inhabit the same street or the same quarter, and to follow the same occupation from father to son, through many generations. Their occupation was probably that of carpenters, and the valley where they lived seems to have been in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem (Nehemiah, II. 35). 17. 18. **she bare Miriam** — It is difficult, as the verses stand at present, to see who is meant. The

following re-adjustment of the text clears away the obscurity: "These are the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took, and she bare Miriam, &c., and his wife Jehudijah bare Jezerel," &c. **Jehudijah** — the Jewess, to distinguish her from his other wife, who was an Egyptian. This passage records a very interesting fact—the marriage of an Egyptian princess to a descendant of Caleb. The marriage must have taken place in the wilderness. The barrier of a different national language and national religion kept the Hebrews separate from the Egyptians; but they did not wholly prevent intimacies, and even occasional intermarriages between private individuals of the two nations. Ere such unions, however, could be sanctioned, the Egyptian party must have renounced idolatry, and this daughter of Pharaoh, as appears from her name, had become a convert to the worship of the God of Israel.

**21-23. POSTERITY OF SHELAH. 21. Laadah . . . the father of the house of them that wrought fine linen** — Here again is another incidental evidence that in very early times certain trades were followed by particular families among the Hebrews, apparently in hereditary succession. Their knowledge of the art of linen manufacture had been, most probably, acquired in Egypt, where the duty of bringing up families to the occupation of their forefathers was a compulsory obligation, whereas in Israel, as in many parts of Asia to this day, it was optional, though common. **22, 23. had the dominion in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem** — "And these are ancient things;" seems a strange rendering of a proper name; and, besides, conveys a meaning that has no bearing on the record. The improved following translation has been suggested: "Sojourned in Moab, but returned to Bethlehem and Adaberim-athekim. These and the inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah were potters, employed by the king in his own work." Gederah or Gederoth and Netaim, belonged to the tribe of Judah, and lay on the south-east border of the Philistines' territory (Joshua, 15. 36; 2 Chronicles, 28. 18).

**24-43. OF SIMEON. 24. The sons of Simeon** — They are classed along with those of Judah, as their possession was partly taken out of the extensive territory of the latter (Joshua, 19. 1). The difference in several particulars of the genealogy given here from that given in other passages, is occasioned by some of the persons mentioned having more than one name, **27. his brethren had not many children** — (see Numbers, 1. 22; 26. 14). **31-43. These were their cities unto the reign of David** — In consequence of the sloth or cowardice of the Simeonites, some of the cities within their allotted territory were only nominally theirs; but were never taken from the Philistines until David's time, when, the Simeonites having forfeited all claim to them, he assigned them to his own tribe of Judah (1 Samuel, 27. 6). **38, 39. increased greatly and they went to the entrance of Gedor** — Simeon having only a part of the land of Judah, they were forced to seek accommodation elsewhere; but their establishment in the new and fertile pastures of Gederah was soon broken up, for, being attacked by a band of nomad plunderers, they were driven from place to place till some of them effected by force a settlement on Mount Seir.

## CHAPTER V.

**1-10. THE LINE OF REUBEN.** I. **Now the sons of Reuben**—In proceeding to give this genealogy, the sacred historian states, in a parenthesis (*v.* 1, 2), the reason why it was not placed first, as Reuben was the eldest son of Jacob. The birthright, which by a foul crime he had forfeited, implied not only dominion, but a double portion (Deuteronomy, 21. 17), and both of these were transferred to Joseph, whose two sons having been adopted as the children of Jacob (Genesis, 48. 5), received each an allotted portion, as forming two distinct tribes in Israel. Joseph then was entitled to the precedence; and yet, as his posterity was not mentioned first, the sacred historian judged it necessary to explain that “the genealogy was not to be reckoned after the birthright,” but with reference to a superior honour and privilege that had been conferred on Judah—not the man, but the tribe, whereby it was invested with the pre-eminence over all the other tribes, and out of it was to spring David with his royal lineage, and especially the great Messiah (Hebrews, 7. 14). These were the two reasons why, in the order of enumeration, the genealogy of Judah is introduced before that of Reuben. 9. **Eastward he inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates**—The settlement was on the East of Jordan, and the history of this tribe, which never took any part in the public affairs or movements of the nation, is comprised in “the multiplication of their cattle in the land of Gilead,” in their “wars with the Bedouin sons of Hagar,” and in the simple labours of pastoral life. They had the right of pasture over an extensive mountain range—the great wilderness of Kedemoth (Deuteronomy, 2. 26), and the Euphrates being a security against their enemies.

**11-26. THE LINE OF GAD.** II-15. **the children of Gad dwelt over against them**—the genealogy of the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh (*v.* 24) is given along with that of the Reubenites, as these three were associated in a separate colony. 16. **Sharon**—The term Sharon was applied as descriptive of any place of extraordinary beauty and productiveness. There were three places in Palestine so called. This Sharon lay east of the Jordan. **upon their borders**—*i. e.*, of Gilead and Bashan—Gilead proper, or at least the largest part, belonged to the Reubenites; and Bashan, the greatest portion of it, belonged to the Manassites. The Gadites occupied an intermediate settlement on the land which lay upon their borders. 17. **All these were reckoned in the days of Jotham**—his long reign and freedom from foreign wars, as well as intestine troubles, were favourable for taking a census of the people. **and in the days of Jeroboam**—the second of that name. 18-22. **Hagarites**—or Hagarenes, originally synonymous with Ishmaelites, but afterward applied to a particular tribe of the Arabs (Cf. Psalm, 83. 6). **Jetur**—his descendants were called Itureans, and the country Auranitis, from Haouran, its chief city. These, who were skilled in archery, were invaded in the time of Joshua by a confederate army of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh,

who, probably incensed by the frequent raids of those marauding neighbours, took reprisals in men and cattle, dispossessed almost the whole of the original inhabitants, and colonized the district themselves. Divine Providence favoured, in a remarkable manner, the Hebrew army in this just war. 26. **the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul**—the Phal-luka of the Ninevite monuments (see 2 Kings, 15. 19). **and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser**—the son of the former. By them the trans-Jordanic tribes, including the other half of Manasseh, settled in Galilee, were removed to Upper Media. This was the *first* captivity (2 Kings, 15. 29).

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-48. LINE OF THE PRIESTS.** 5. **Uzzi**—It is supposed that, in his days, the high priesthood was, for unrecorded reasons, transferred from Eleazar's family to Ithamar's, in which it continued for several generations. 10. **he it is that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem**—It is doubtful whether the person in favour of whom this testimony is borne, be Johanan or Azariah. If the former, he is the same as Jehoiada, who rendered important public services (2 Kings, 11); if the latter, it refers to the worthy and independent part he acted in resisting the unwarrantable encroachments of Uzziah (2 Chronicles, 26. 17). **in the temple that Solomon built**—described in this particular manner to distinguish it from the second temple, which was in existence at the time when this history was written. 14. **Azariah begat Seraiah**—He filled the supreme pontifical office at the destruction of Jerusalem, and, along with his deputy and others, was executed by Nebuchadnezzar's orders at Riblah (2 Kings, 25. 18, 21). The line of high priests, under the first temple, which from Zadok amounted to twelve, terminated with him. **16-48. The sons of Levi; Gershom, &c.**—This repetition (see *v.* 1), is made, as the historian here begins to trace the genealogy of the Levitical families who were not priests. The list is a long one, comprising the chiefs or heads of their several families until David's reign, who made a new and different classification of them by courses. 20. **Zimmah, his son**—His grandson (*v.* 42). 24. **Uriel**—Or Zephaniah (*v.* 36). 27. **Elkanah**—The father of the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel, 1. 1). 28. **the sons of Samuel**—Are here named Vashni and Abiah. The first-born is called (1 Samuel, 8. 2) Joel; and this name is given to him in *v.* 33 of this chapter. It is now generally thought by the best critics that, through an error of the copyists, an omission has been made of the eldest son's name, and that Vashni, which is not the name of a person, merely signifies "and the second." This critical emendation of the text makes all clear as well as consistent with other passages relating to the family of Samuel. 32. **in the house of the Lord**—*i. e.*, in the tent which David had erected for receiving the ark after it was removed from the house of Obed-edom. This was a considerable time before the temple was built. **they waited on their office according to their order**—Which

David, doubtless, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, had instituted for the better regulation of Divine worship. 33. **Shemuel** — *i. e.*, Samuel. This is the exact representation of the Hebrew name. 39. **his brother Asaph** — They were brothers naturally, both being descended from Levi, as well as officially, both being of the Levitical order. 42. **Ethan** — Or Jeduthun (ch. 9. 16; 2 Chronicles, 35. 15). 48. **their brethren also, the Levites, were appointed unto all manner of service** — Those of them who were endowed with musical tastes and talents were employed in various other departments of the temple service.

49-81. OFFICE OF AARON AND HIS SONS. 49. **But Aaron and his sons offered, &c.** — The office and duties of the high priests having been already described, the names of those who successively filled that important office are recorded. 60. **thirteen cities** No more than eleven are named here; but two additional ones are mentioned (Joshua, 21. 16, 17), which makes up the thirteen. 61. **unto the sons of Kohath which were left** — *i. e.*, in addition to the priests belonging to the same family and tribe of Levi. **by lot ten cities** — (Joshua, 21. 26). The sacred historian gives an explanation (*v.* 66). Eight of these are mentioned, but only two of them are taken out of the half tribe of Manasseh (*v.* 70); the names of the other two are given (Joshua, 21. 21) where full and detailed notices of these arrangements may be found. 62. **unto the sons of Gershon** — Supply "the children of Israel gave." 67. **they gave unto them of the cities of refuge** — The names of the cities given here are considerably different from those applied to them (Joshua, 21. 14). In the lapse of centuries, and from the revolutions of society, changes might have been expected to take place in the form or dialectic pronunciation of the names of those cities; and this will sufficiently account for the variations that are found in the lists as enumerated here and in an earlier book. As to these cities themselves, that were assigned to the Levites, they were widely remote and separated — partly in fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy (Genesis, 49. 7), and partly that the various districts of the country might obtain a competent supply of teachers who might instruct the people in the knowledge, and animate them to the observance, of a law which had so important a bearing on the promotion both of their private happiness and their national prosperity.

## CHAPTER VII.

1-5. SONS OF ISSACHAR. 1. **Jashub** — Or Job (Genesis, 46. 13). 2. **whose number was in the days of David two and twenty thousand and six hundred** — Although a census was taken in the reign of David by order of that monarch, it is not certain that the sacred historian had it in his eye, since we find here the tribe of Benjamin enumerated, which was not taken in David's time; and there are other points of dissimilarity. 3. **five; all of them chief men** — Four only are mentioned; so that as they are stated to be five, in this number the father, Izrahiah, must be considered as included.

otherwise one of the names must have dropped out of the text. They were each at the head of a numerous and influential division of their tribe. 5. **fourscore and seven thousand**—Exclusive of the 58,600 men which the Tola branch had produced (*v.* 24), so that in the days of David the tribe would have contained a population of 45,600. This large increase was owing to the practice of polygamy, as well as the fruitfulness of the women. A plurality of wives, though tolerated among the Hebrews, was confined chiefly to the great and wealthy; but it seems to have been generally esteemed a privilege by the tribe of Issachar, “for they had many wives and sons.”

**6-12. OF BENJAMIN.** 6. **The sons of Benjamin**—Ten are reckoned (Genesis, 46. 21), but only five (ch. 8. 1; Numbers, 26. 38). Perhaps five of them were distinguished as chiefs of illustrious families, but two having fallen in the bloody wars waged against Benjamin (Judges, 20. 46), there remained only three branches of this tribe, and these only are enumerated. **Jediael**—Or Asbel (Genesis, 46. 21). 7. **the sons of Bela**—Each of them was chief or leader of the family to which he belonged. In an earlier period seven great families of Benjamin are mentioned (Numbers, 26. 38), five of them being headed by these five sons of Benjamin, and two descended from Bela. Here five families of Bela are specified, whence we are led to conclude that time or the ravages of war had greatly changed the condition of Benjamin, or that the five families of Bela were subordinate to the other great divisions that sprang directly from the five sons of the patriarch. 12. **Shuphim also, and Huphim**—they are called (Genesis, 46. 21) Muphim and Huphim, and (Numbers, 26. 39) Hupham and Shupham; they were the children of Ir, or Iri (*v.* 7). **and Hushim, the sons (son) of Aher**—Aher signifies “another,” and some eminent critics, taking Aher as a common noun, render the passage thus, “and Hushim, another son.” Shuphim, Muphim and Hushim are plural words, and therefore denote not individuals, but the heads of their respective families; and as they were not comprised in the above enumeration (*v.* 7, 9), they are inserted here in the form of an appendix. Some render the passage “Hushim, the son of another,” *i. e.*, tribe or family; the name occurs among the sons of Dan (Genesis, 46. 23), and it is a presumption in favour of this being the true rendering, that after having recorded the genealogy of Naphtali (*v.* 13), the sacred historian adds, “the sons of Bilhah, the handmaid, who was the mother of Dan and Naphtali.” We naturally expect, therefore, that those two will be noticed together, but Dan is not mentioned at all, if not in this passage.

**13. OF NAPHTALI.** 13. **Shallum**—or Shillem (Genesis, 46. 24). **sons of Bilhah**—as Dan and Naphtali were her sons, Hushim, as well as those enumerated in *v.* 13, were her grandsons.

**14-40. OF MANASSEH** 14. **The sons of Manasseh**—or descendants: for Ashriel was a grandson, and Zelophehad was a generation farther removed in descent (Numbers, 26. 33). The text, as it stands, is so confused and complicated that it is exceedingly difficult to trace the genealogical thread, and a great variety of conjectures have been made with a view to clear away the obscur-



ity. The passage should probably be rendered thus: The sons of Manasseh were Ashriel, whom his Syrian concubine bare to him, and Machir, the father of Gilead (whom his wife bare to him). Machir took for a wife Maachah, sister to Huppim and Shuppim. 21. **whom the men of Gath slew, &c.**—This interesting little episode gives us a glimpse of the state of Hebrew society in Egypt; for the occurrence narrated seems to have taken place before the Israelites left that country. The patriarch Ephraim was then alive, though he must have arrived at a very advanced age; and the Hebrew people, at all events those of them who were his descendants, still retained their pastoral character. It was in perfect consistency with the ideas and habits of Oriental shepherds that they should have made a raid on the neighbouring tribe of the Philistines for the purpose of plundering their flocks, for nothing is more common among them than hostile incursions on the inhabitants of towns, or on other nomad tribes with whom they have no league or amity. But a different view of the incident is brought out, if, instead of "because," we render the Hebrew particle "when" they came down to take their cattle, for the tenor of the context leads rather to the conclusion that "the men of Gath" were the aggressors, who, making a sudden foray on the Ephraimite flocks, killed the shepherds, including several of the sons of Ephraim. The calamity spread a deep gloom around the tent of their aged father, and was the occasion of his receiving visits of condolence from his distant relatives according to the custom of the East, which is remarkably exemplified in the history of Job (Job, 2. 11; Cf. John, 11. 19).

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1-32. SONS AND CHIEF MEN OF BENJAMIN. I. Now Benjamin begat, &c.**—This chapter contains some supplementary particulars in addition to what has been already said regarding the tribe of Benjamin (ch. 7. 6). The names of many of the persons mentioned are different from those given by Moses—a diversity which may be accounted for in part on grounds formerly stated, viz., either that the person had more than one name, or that the word "sons" is used in a loose sense for grandsons or descendants. But there are other circumstances to be taken into account in considering the details of this chapter, viz., first, that the genealogies of the Benjamites were disordered or destroyed by the almost total extermination of this tribe (Judges, 20); secondly, that a great number of Benjamites, born in Assyria, are mentioned here, who returned from the long captivity in Babylon, and established themselves—some in Jerusalem, others in different parts of Judea. There were more returned from Babylon of the families belonging to this tribe than to any other, except Judah; and, hence, many strange names are here introduced, some of which will be found in the list of the restored exiles (Cf. Ezra, 2). 6. **these are the sons of Ehud**—Most probably the Judge of Israel (Judges, 3. 15). His descendants, who had at first been established in

Geba in Benjamin, emigrated in a body, under the direction of Gera (*v.* 7), to Manahath, where their increased numbers would find more ample accommodation. Manahath was within the territory of Judah. 8. **Shaharaim begat children in the country of Moab**—He had probably been driven to take refuge in that foreign land on the same calamitous occasion that forced Elimelech to emigrate thither (*Ruth*, *i.* 1). But, destitute of natural affection, he forsook or divorced his two wives, and, in the land of his sojourn, married a third by whom he had several sons. But there is another explanation given of the conduct of this Benjamite polygamist. His children by Hushim are mentioned (*v.* 11), while his other wife is unnoticed. Hence, it has been thought probable that it is Baara who is mentioned under the name of Hodesh, so called, because her husband, after long desertion, returned and cohabited with her as before. 28. **These dwelt in Jerusalem**—The ordinary and stated inhabitants of Jerusalem were Judahites, Benjamites and Levites. But, at the time referred to here, the chiefs or heads of the principal families who are enumerated (*v.* 14-27), established themselves in this city after their return from the captivity.

**33-40. STOCK OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.** 33. **Ner begat Kish**—The father of Ner, though not mentioned here, is stated (*ch.* 9. 35) to have been Jehiel. Moreover, the father of Kish is said (*I Samuel*, 9. 1) to have been Abiel, the son of Zeror; whence it would seem that Abiel and Ner were names of the same person. **Abinadab**—the same as Ishui (*I Samuel*, 14. 49). **Eshbaal**—that is, Ishbosheth. 34. **Merib-baal**—that is, Mephibosheth. 36. **Jehoada**—or Jara (*ch.* 9. 42). 40. **mighty men of valour, archers**—(see *Judges*, 20. 16), great strength as well as skill was requisite in ancient archery, as the bow, which was of steel, was bent by treading with the feet and pulling the string with both hands.

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-26. ORIGINAL REGISTERS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH'S GENEALOGIES—all Israel were reckoned by genealogies**—From the beginning of the Hebrew nation, public records were kept containing a registration of the name of every individual, as well as the tribe and family to which he belonged. “The book of the kings of Israel and Judah” does not refer to the two canonical books that are known in Scripture by that name, but to authenticated copies of those registers, placed under the official care of the sovereigns; and as a great number of the Israelites (*v.* 3) took refuge in Judah during the invasion of Shalmanezzer, they carried the public records along with them. The genealogies given in the preceding chapters were drawn from the public records in the archives both of Israel and Judah; and those given in this chapter relate to the period subsequent to the restoration; whence it appears (*Cf.* *ch.* 3. 17-24), that the genealogical registers were kept during the captivity in Babylon. These genealogical tables, then, are of the highest authority for truth and correctness, the earlier portion being extracted from the authenticated records

of the nation; and as to those which belong to the time of the captivity, they were drawn up by a contemporary writer, who, besides enjoying the best sources of information and being of the strictest integrity, was guided and preserved from all error by Divine inspiration. 2. **the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions**—This chapter relates wholly to the first returned exiles. Almost all the names recur in Nehemiah (ch. 11), although there are differences which will be explained there. The same division of the people into four classes was continued *after* as before the captivity, viz., the priests, Levites, natives who now were called by the common name of Israelites and Nethinims (Joshua, 9. 27; Ezra, 2. 43; 8. 20). When the historian speaks of "the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions," he implies that there were others who afterward returned and settled in possessions not occupied by the first. Accordingly we read of a great number returning successively under Ezra, Nehemiah and at a later period. And some of those who returned to the ancient inheritance of their fathers, had lived before the time of the captivity (Ezra, 3. 12); Haggai, 2. 4, 10). 18. **the king's gate**—The king had a gate from his palace into the temple (2 Kings, 16. 18), which, doubtless, was kept constantly closed except for the monarch's use; and although there was no king in Israel on the return from the captivity, yet the old ceremonial was kept up, probably in the hope that the sceptre would, ere long, be restored to the house of David. It is an honour by which Eastern kings are distinguished, to have a gate exclusively devoted to their own special use and which is kept constantly closed, except when he goes out or returns (Ezekiel, 44. 2). There being no king then in Israel this gate would be always shut.

## CHAPTER X.

1-7. SAUL'S OVERTHROW AND DEATH. 1. **Now the Philistines fought against Israel**—The details of this chapter have no relation to the preceding genealogies, and seem to be inserted solely to introduce the narrative of David's elevation to the throne of the whole kingdom. The parallel between the books of Samuel and Chronicles commences with this chapter, which relates the issue of the fatal battle of Gilboa almost in the very same words as 1 Samuel, 31. 3. **the battle went sore against Saul; and the archers hit him, and he was wounded**—the *Heb.* words may be thus rendered—The archers found (attacked) him, and he feared the archers. He was not wounded, at least dangerously, when he resolved on committing suicide. The deed was the effect of sudden terror and overwhelming depression of spirits. [CALMET.] 4. **his armour-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid**—He was, of course, placed in the same perilous condition as Saul. But it is probable that the feelings that restrained him from complying with Saul's wish were a profound respect for royalty, mingled with apprehension of the shock which such a catastrophe would give to the national feelings and interests. 6. **Saul died,**

and his three sons, and all his house—His sons and courtiers who were here engaged in the battle. But it appears that Ishbosheth and Mephibosheth were kept at Gibeah on account of their youth.

**8-14. THE PHILISTINES TRIUMPH OVER HIM. 10. put his armour in the house of their gods**—It was common among the heathen to vow to a national or favourite deity, that, in the event of a victory, the armour of the enemies' king, or of some eminent leader, should be dedicated to him as an offering of gratitude. Such trophies were usually suspended on the pillars of the temple. **fastened his head in the temple of Dagon**—While the trunk or headless corpse was affixed to the wall of Bethshan (I Samuel, 31. 10). **13. Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord**—In having spared the king of the Amalekites, and taken the flocks of the people as spoil, as well as in having consulted a Pythoness. Both of these acts were great sins—the first as a violation of God's express and positive command, and the second as contrary to a well-known statute of the kingdom (Leviticus, 19. 31). **14. And inquired not of the Lord**—He had done so in form (I Samuel, 28. 6), but not in the spirit of a humble penitent, nor with the believing confidence of a sincere worshipper. His inquiry was, in fact, a mere mockery, and his total want of all right religious impressions was manifested by his rushing from God to a wretched impostor in the service of the devil.

## CHAPTER XI.

**1-3. DAVID MADE KING. 1. Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron**—This event happened on the death of Ishbosheth (see 2 Samuel, 5. 1-3). The convention of the estates of the kingdom, the public and solemn homage of the representatives of the people and the repeated anointing of the new king in their presence and by their directions, seem to have been necessary to the general acknowledgment of the sovereign on the part of the nation (Cf. I Samuel, 11. 15).

**4-9. HE WINS THE CASTLE OF ZION FROM THE JEBUSITES BY JOAB'S VALOUR. 4. David and all Israel went to . . . Jebus**—(see 2 Samuel, 5. 6-13). **8. Joab repaired the rest of the city**—David built a new town to the north of the old one on Mount Zion; but Joab was charged with a commission to restore the part that had been occupied by the ancient Jebus, to repair the breaches made during the siege, to rebuild the houses which had been demolished or burned in the sacking of the town, and to preserve all that had escaped the violence of the soldiery. This work of reconstruction is not noticed elsewhere. [CALMET.]

**10-47. A CATALOGUE OF HIS WORTHIES. 10. These . . . are the chief of the mighty men**—(see 2 Samuel, 23. 8, 39). They are here described as those who held strongly with him (*Març.*) to make him king, &c. In these words, the sacred historian assigns a reason for introducing the list of their names immediately after his account of the election of David as king and the conquest of Jeru-

salem, viz., that they assisted in making David king. In the original form of the list, and the connection in which it occurs in Samuel, there is no reference to the choice of a king, and even in this passage, it is only in the clause introduced into the superscription that such a reference occurs. [KEIL.] 11-13. **Jashobeam, an Hachmonite** — Or son of Hachmoni. He is called also son of Zabdiel (ch. 27.2). so that, strictly speaking, he was the grandson of Hachmoni (Cf. ch. 27. 32). **lifted up his spear against three hundred, slain by him at one time** — The feat is said (2 Samuel, 23. 8), to have been a slaughter of eight hundred in one day. Some endeavour to reconcile the statements in that passage and in this by supposing that he slew eight hundred on one occasion, and three hundred on another; while others conjecture that he attacked a body of eight hundred, and having slain three hundred of them, the rest fled. [LIGHTFOOT.] 12. **the three mighties** — Only two are mentioned, viz.: Jashobeam and Eleazar — the third, Shammah (2 Samuel, 23. 11), is not named in this passage. 13. **He was with David at Pas-dammim** — It was at the time when he was a fugitive in the wilderness, and parched with thirst under the burning heat of noon-day, he wistfully thought of the cool fountain of his native village. This is a notice of the achievement to which Eleazar owed his fame, but the details are found only in 2 Samuel, 23. 9-11, where it is further said that he was aided by the valour of Shammah, a fact corroborated in the passage before us (v. 14), where it is recorded of the heroes, that "*they* set themselves in the midst of that parcel." As the singular number is used in speaking of Shammah (2 Samuel, 23. 12), the true view seems to be that when Eleazar had given up from exhaustion, Shammah succeeded, and by his fresh and extraordinary prowess preserved the field. **barley** — Or lentiles (2 Samuel, 23. 11). Ephes-dammim was situated between Shocoh and Azekah, in the west of the Judahite territory. These feats were performed when David acted as Saul's general against the Philistines. 15-19. **David longed and said, Oh that one would give me drink . . . of the well of Beth-lehem** — (see 2 Samuel, 23. 15). This chivalrous act evinces the enthusiastic devotion of David's men, that they were ready to gratify his smallest wish at the risk of their lives. It is probable that, when uttering the wish, David had no recollection of the military posted at Beth-lehem. It is generally taken for granted that those who fought a way to the well of Beth-lehem were the three champions just mentioned. But this is far from being clear, and on the contrary, it would seem that three different heroes are referred to, for Abishai (v. 20) was one of them. The camp of the Philistines was in the valley of Rephaim (v. 15), which lay on the west of Jerusalem, but an outpost was stationed at Beth-lehem (v. 16), and through this garrison they had to force a passage. 21. **Howbeit he attained not to the first three** — (See 2 Samuel, 23. 19). 22. **Benaiah . . . of Kabzeel** — A town in the south of Judah (Joshua, 15. 21; Nehemiah, 11. 25). It is said that "he had done many acts" — though three only are mentioned as specimens of his daring energy and fearless courage. **slew two lion-like men of Moab** — *lit.*, lions of God, *i. e.*, great lions, or champions. This gallant feat was probably

achieved in David's hostile invasion of Moab (2 Samuel, 8. 2). **also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day**—Probably a cave into which Benaiah had taken refuge from the snow-storm, and in which he encountered a savage lion which had its lair there. In a spacious cave the achievement would be far greater than if the monster had been previously snared or cabined in a pit. 23 **He went down**—The ordinary phraseology for expressing an engagement in battle. The encounter of Benaiah with this gigantic Egyptian reminds us, in some respects, of David's combat with Goliath. At least, the height of this giant, which is about eight feet, and his armour, resembled him of Gath. **with a staff**—*i. e.*, having no other weapon in his hand than his walking-stick. 25. **David set him over his guard**—The Cherethites and Pelethites that composed the small body-guard in immediate attendance on the king. 26. **Also the valiant men of the armies**—This was the third degree of military rank, and Asahel was their chief; the names of few of those mentioned are historically known. 27. **Shammoth**—Between this name and Hebez, that of Elikah has evidently fallen out, as we may see (2 Samuel, 23. 25). [BERTHEAU.] 30. **Maharai**—Chief of the detachment of the guards, who attended on the king in the tenth month—January—(ch. 27. 13; 2 Samuel, 23. 28). 39. **Naharai**—Armour-bearer to Joab (2 Samuel, 23. 37). The non-occurrence of Joab's name in any of the three catalogues is most probably to be accounted for by the circumstance that his office as commander-in-chief raised him to a position superior to all these orders of military knighthood. 41. **Uriah the Hittite**—The enrollment of this name in such a list, attesting, as it does, his distinguished merits as a brave and devoted officer, aggravates the criminality of David's outrage on his life and honour. The number of the names from *v.* 26 to *v.* 41 (exclusive of Asahel and Uriah who were dead), is thirty; and, from *v.* 41 to 47, is sixteen; making together forty-eight (see ch. 27). Of those mentioned (*v.* 26-41), the greater part belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; the sixteen names (*v.* 41-47) are all associated with places unknown, or with cities and districts on the east of the Jordan. The Northern tribes do not appear to have furnished any leaders. [BERTHEAU.]

## CHAPTER XII.

**1-22. THE COMPANIES THAT CAME TO DAVID AT ZIKLAG.** 1-7. **Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag**—There are three lists given in this chapter, arranged, apparently, according to the order of time, when the parties joined the standard of David. **while he yet kept himself close because of Saul**—*i. e.*, when the king's jealousy had driven him into exile from the court and the country. **Ziklag**—(see 1 Samuel, 27. 6). It was during his retirement in that Philistine town that he was joined in rapid succession by the heroes who afterward contributed so much to the glory of his reign. 2. **of Saul's brethren of Benjamin**—*i. e.*, of the tribe of Benjamin (Cf. *v.* 29), but some of them might be relatives of the king. This movement to which the parties were

led doubtless by the secret impulse of the Spirit, was of vast importance to the cause of David, as it must have been founded on their observation of the evident withdrawal of God's blessing from Saul, and his favouring presence with David, to whom it was universally known the Divine King of Israel had given the crown in reversion. The accession of the Benjamites who came first, and their resolution to share his fortunes, must have been particularly grateful to David, as it was a public and emphatic testimony by those who had enjoyed the best means of information to the unblemished excellence of his character, as well as a decided protest against the grievous wrong inflicted, by causelessly outlawing a man who had rendered such eminent services to his country. 4. **Ismaiah the Gibeonite**—It appears that not only the Canaanites who were admitted into the congregation (Joshua, 9), but people of the tribe of Benjamin were among the inhabitants of Gibeon. The mention of "the Gederathite," probably from Gaderah (Joshua, 15. 36), in the lowlands of Judah; of the Korhites (*v.* 6), from Korah (ch. 2. 43), and of Gedor (*v.* 7), a town in Judah to the south-west of Bethlehem (Cf. ch. 4. 4), shows that this first list contains men of Judah as well as Benjamin. [BERTHEAU.] 8-13. **of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David**—*i. e.*, from the service of Saul, and from the rest of the Gadites who remained steadfast adherents of his cause. **into the hold**—or fortress, *i. e.*, of Ziklag, which was in the wilderness of Judah. **whose faces were like the faces of lions, &c.**—A fierce lion-like countenance (2 Samuel, 1. 23), and great agility in pursuit (2 Samuel, 2. 18), were qualities of the highest estimation of ancient warfare. 14. **one of the least was over an hundred, and the greatest was over a thousand**—David, while at Ziklag, had not so large an amount of forces as to give each of these the command of so many men. Another meaning, therefore, must obviously be sought, and excluding *was*, which is a supplement by our translators, the import of the passage is, that one of the least could discomfit a hundred, and the greatest was worth a thousand ordinary men; a strong hyperbole to express their uncommon valour. 15. **These are they that went over Jordan in the first month**—*i. e.*, in spring, when the swollen river generally fills up the banks of its channel (see Joshua, 3. 15; 4. 10; 5. 10). **they put to flight all them of the valleys**—This was probably done at the time of their separating themselves; and their purpose being discovered, they had to cut their passage through the opposing adherents of Saul, both on the eastern and western banks. The impossibility of taking the fords at such a time, and the violent rapidity of the current, make this crossing of the Jordan—in whatever way these Gadites accomplished it—a remarkable feat. 16. **the children of Benjamin and Judah**—It is probable that the Benjamites invited the Judahites to accompany them, in order to prevent David being suspicious of them: Their anticipations, as the result showed, were well founded. He did suspect them, but the doubts of David as to their object in repairing to him, were promptly dispelled by Amasai or Amasa, who, by the secret impulse of the Spirit, assured him of their

strong attachment and their zealous services from a unanimous conviction that his cause was owned and blessed of God (1 Samuel, 18. 12-14). 19-22. **there fell some of Manasseh**—The period of their accession is fixed as the time when David came with the Philistines against Saul to battle, "but they helped them not" (see 1 Samuel, 29. 4). 20. **As he went to Ziklag**—If those Manassites joined him on his return to Ziklag, after his dismissal from the Philistine army, then their arrival took place before the battle of Gilboa could have been fought (Cf. 1 Samuel, 29. 11). Convinced of the desperate state of Saul's affairs, they abandoned him, and resolved to transfer their allegiance to David. But some learned men think that they came as fugitives from that disastrous field. [CALMET & EWALD.] **captains of the thousands of Manasseh**—Those seven were commanders of the large military divisions of their tribe. 21, 22. **they helped David against the band**—*i. e.*, the Amalekites who had pillaged Ziklag in David's absence. This military expedition was made by *all* his men (1 Samuel, 30. 9), who, as David's early helpers, are specially distinguished from those who are mentioned in the latter portion of the chapter. **the host of God**—*i. e.*, a great and powerful army.

23-40. THE ARMIES THAT CAME TO HIM AT HEBRON. 23. **These are the numbers of the bands . . . that came to David to Hebron**—After the death of Ishbosheth (2 Samuel, 5. 1). **to turn the kingdom of Saul to him according to the word of the Lord**—(ch. 10. 14; 11. 3, 10). The account commences with the Southern tribes, Levi being associated with Judah and Simeon, as the great majority of the leading men in this tribe resided in Judah, and, after recounting the representatives of the Northern tribes, concludes with those on the east of Jordan. 27. **Jehoiada, the leader of the Aaronites**—Not the high priest, for that was Abiathar (1 Samuel, 23. 9), but the leader of the Aaronite warriors, supposed to be the father of Benaiah (ch. 11. 22). 29. **Benjamin . . . 3000**—This small number shows the unpopularity of the movement in this tribe; and, indeed, it is expressly stated that the mass of the population had, even after Ishbosheth's death, anxiously endeavoured to secure the crown in the family of Saul. 32. **Children of Issachar, that had understanding of the times, &c.**—Jewish writers say that the people of this tribe were eminent for their acquirements in astronomical and physical science; and the object of the remark was probably to show that the intelligent and learned classes were united with the military, and had declared for David. 33. **Zebulun . . . could keep rank**—*i. e.*, were more disciplined soldiers than the rest. **not of double heart**—Though their numbers were large, all were in a high degree well affected to David. 38. **All the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David king**—*i. e.*, entertained an unanimous desire for his elevation. 39, 40. **There they were with David three days, eating and drinking**—According to the statements made in the preceding verses, the number of armed warriors assembled in Hebron on this occasion amounted to 300,000. Supplies of provisions were abundantly furnished, not only by the people of the neighbourhood, but from distant parts of the country, for all wished the festivities to be on a scale of liberality and magnificence suitable to the auspicious occasion.



## CHAPTER XIII.

**1-8. DAVID FETCHES THE ARK FROM KIRJATH-JEARIM. 1-3.** David consulted . . . **And let us bring again the ark of our God** — Gratitude for the high and splendid dignity to which he had been elevated, would naturally, at this period, impart a fresh animation and impulse to the habitually fervent piety of David; but, at the same time, he was animated by other motives; he fully understood his position as ruler under the theocracy, and, on entering on his duties, was resolved to fulfill his mission as a constitutional king of Israel. Accordingly, his first act as a sovereign related to the interests of religion, and the ark being then the grand instrument and ornament of it, he takes the opportunity of the official representatives of the nation being with him, to consult them about the propriety of establishing it in a more public and accessible locality. The assembly at which he spoke of this consisted of the Sheloshim, princes of thousands (2 Samuel, 6. 1). During the reign of the late king the ark had been left in culpable neglect, and the consequence was that the people had, to a great extent, been careless about the ordinances of Divine worship, or had contented themselves with offering sacrifices at Gibeon, without any thought of the ark, though it was the chief and most vital part of the tabernacle. The duty and advantages of this religious movement suggested by the king were apparent, and the proposal met with universal approval. **2. If it seem good unto you, and . . . it be of the Lord** — *i. e.*, I shall conclude that this favourite measure of mine is agreeable to the mind of God, if it receive your hearty concurrence. **let us send abroad to our brethren everywhere** — He wished to make it known throughout the country, in order that there might be a general assembly of the nation, and that preparations might be made on a scale and of a kind suitable to the inauguration of the august ceremonial. **and with them also the priests and Levites . . . in their cities and suburbs** — (see Numbers, 35). The original terms, "Let us send," imply immediate execution; and, doubtless, the publication of the royal edict would have been followed by the appointment of an early day for the contemplated solemnity, had it not been retarded by a sudden invasion of the Philistines, who were twice repulsed with great loss (2 Samuel, 5. 17); by the capture of Jerusalem, and the transference of the seat of government to that city. Finding, however, soon after, peace restored and his throne established, he resumed his preparations for removing the ark to the metropolis. **5. from Shihor of Egypt** — (Joshua, 15. 4, 47; Numbers, 34. 5; 1 Kings 8. 65, 2 Kings, 24. 7, 2 Chronicles, 7. 8). A small brook flowing into the Mediterranean, near the modern El-arish, which forms the southern boundary of Palestine. **unto the entering of Hamath** — The defile between the mountain ranges of Syria and the extreme limit of Palestine on the north. **6-14. David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah** — (see 2 Samuel, 6. 1-11). **6. whose name is called on it** — Rather, "who is worshipped there" (2 Samuel, 6. 2).

CHAPTER XIV.

**1-2. HIRAM'S KINDNESS TO DAVID: DAVID'S FELICITY.** 1. **Now Hiram, king of Tyre**—The alliance of this neighbouring king, and the important advantages derived from it, were among the most fortunate circumstances in David's reign. The providence of God appeared concurrent with His promise in smoothing the early course of his reign. Having conquered the Jebusites, and made Sion the royal residence, he had now, along with internal prosperity, established an advantageous treaty with a neighbouring prince; and hence, in immediate connection with the mention of this friendly league; it is said, "David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel." 2. **his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel**—This is an important truth, that sovereigns are invested with royal honour and authority, not for their own sakes so much as for that of their people. But while it is true of all kings, it was especially applicable to the monarchs of Israel, and even David was made to know that all his glory and greatness were given only to fit him, as the minister of God, to execute the Divine purposes toward the chosen people.

**3-7. HIS WIVES.** 3. **David took more wives at Jerusalem**—(see 2 Samuel, 3. 5). His concubines are mentioned (ch. 3. 9); where also is given a list of his children (*v.* 5-8) and those born in Jerusalem (2 Samuel, 5. 14-16). In that, however, the names of Eliphalet and Nogah do not occur, and Beeliada appears to be the same as Eliada.

**8-17. HIS VICTORIES OVER THE PHILISTINES.** 8. **all the Philistines went up to seek David**—In the hope of accomplishing his ruin (for so the phrase is used, 1 Samuel, 23. 15; 24. 2, 3) before his throne was consolidated. Their hostility arose, both from a belief that his patriotism would lead him, ere long, to wipe out the national dishonour at Gilboa; and by fear that, in any invasion of their country, his thorough knowledge of their weak points would give him superior advantages. They resolved, therefore, to surprise and crush him ere he was fairly seated on his throne. 11. **they came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there**—In an engagement fought at Mount Perazim (Isaiah, 28. 21), in the valley of Rephaim, a few miles west of Jerusalem, the Philistines were defeated and put to flight. 12. **when they had left their gods**—(see 2 Samuel, 5. 21). 13. **the Philistines yet again spread themselves**—They renewed the campaign the next season, taking the same route. David, according to Divine directions, did not confront them. 14. **Go not up after them**—The text in 2 Samuel, 5. 23, more correctly has, "Go not up." **turn away from them**—*i. e.*, by stealing round a Baca-grove, come upon their rear. **for God is gone forth before thee**—"The sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees," *i. e.*, the rustling of the leaves by a strong breeze suddenly rising, was the sign by which David was Divinely apprised of the precise moment for the attack. The impetuosity of his onset was like the gush of a pent-up torrent,

which sweeps away all in its course, and in allusion to this incident the place got its name. 16. **From Gibeon . . . to Gazer**—Geba or Gibeon (2 Samuel, 5. 25), now Yefa, in the province of Judah. The line from this to Gazer was intersected by the roads which led from Judah to the cities of the Philistines, and to recover possession of it, therefore, as was effected by this decisive battle, was equivalent to setting free the whole mountains of Judah as far as their most westerly slope. [BERTHEAU.]

## CHAPTER XV.

**1-24. DAVID BRINGS THE ARK FROM OBEDEDOM. 1. David made him houses in the city of David**—Through the liberality of his Tyrian ally (ch. 14. 1) David was enabled to erect, not only a palace for himself, but to furnish suitable accommodation for his numerous family. Where polygamy prevails, each wife has a separate house or suite of apartments for herself and children. **prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched for it a tent**—*i. e.*, made an entirely new one upon the model of the former—the old tabernacle which Moses had constructed in the wilderness and which had hitherto served the purpose of a sacred covering, being to be left at Gibeon, in consequence either of the unwillingness of the inhabitants to part with such a venerable relic or of there being no use for it in Jerusalem, where a more solid and sumptuous edifice was contemplated. If it appear surprising that David “made him houses” before he prepared this new tabernacle, it should be remembered that he had received no Divine intimation respecting such a work. **2. Then David said, none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites**—After the lapse of three months (ch. 13. 14), the purpose of transporting the ark to Jerusalem was resumed. Time and reflection had led to a discovery of the cause of the painful catastrophe that marred the first attempt, and in preparing for the solemn procession that was now to usher the sacred symbol into its resting place, David took special care that the carriage should be regulated in strict conformity to the law (Numbers, 4. 5, 15; 7. 9; 10. 17). **3. David gathered all Israel together**—Some are of opinion that this was done on one of the three great festivals, but at whatever time the ceremonial took place, it was of great importance to summon a general convocation of the people, many of whom, from the long-continued disorders of the kingdom, might have had little or no opportunity of knowing any thing of the ark, which had been allowed to remain so long in obscurity and neglect. **4. David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites**—The children of Aaron were the two priests (*v.* 11), Zadok and Abiathar, heads of the two priestly houses of Eleazar and Ithamar and colleagues in the high priesthood (2 Samuel, 20. 25). The Levites were the chiefs of their father’s house (*v.* 12); four belonging to the Kohatnite branch on whose shoulders the ark was to be borne, *viz.*, Uriel, Shemaiah—descended from Elizaphan or Elzaphan—(Exodus, 6 22), Hebron (Exodus, 6. 18;

ch. 6. 2), and Amminadab from Uzziel (Exodus, 6. 22). **12. sanctify yourselves**—This special sanctification, which was required on all grave and important occasions, consisted in observing the strictest abstinence, as well as cleanliness, both in person and dress (see Genesis, 35. 2; Exodus, 19. 10. 15); and in the neglect of these rules no step could have been taken (2 Chronicles, 30. 3). **16-24. David spake to the chief of the Levites . . . to appoint singers with instruments**—These eminent Levites were instructed to train the musicians and singers who were under them for the solemn procession. The performers were ranged in three choirs or bands, and the names of the principal leaders are given (*v.* 17, 18, 21), with the instruments respectively used by each. Ben (*v.* 18) is omitted (*v.* 20). Either it was used merely as a common noun, to intimate that Zechariah was the son of Jaziel or Aziel, or Ben is the same as Azariah. **22. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites**—He was not of the six heads of the Levitical families, but a chief in consequence of his office, which required learning, without regard to birth or family. **instructed about the song**—He directed all these bands as to the proper time when each was to strike in or change their notes; or, as some render the passage, "He led the burdens, for he was skilled," *i. e.*, in the custom which it was necessary to observe in the carriage of the holy things. [BERTHEAU.] **23. Berechiah and Elkanah were door-keepers**—Who marched immediately in front, while Obed-edom and Jeiel went in the rear, of the ark. **25. So David and the elders . . . and captains . . . went**—The pious design of David in ordering all his principal ministers and officers to take part in this solemn work, and imparting so much pomp and imposing ceremony to the procession, was evidently to inspire the popular mind with a profound veneration for the ark, and to give the young especially salutary impressions of religion, which would be renewed by the remembrance that they had been witnesses of the august solemnity in which the king and the highest aristocracy of the land participated, vieing with all other classes to do honour to the God of Israel. **26. It came to pass, &c.**—(See 2 Samuel, 6. 13-23). **they offered seven bullocks and seven rams**—The Levites seem to have entered on this duty with fear and trembling; and finding that they might advance without any such indications of Divine wrath as Uzza had experienced (ch. 13. 10), they offered an ox and a fatted sheep immediately after starting (2 Samuel, 6. 13), and seven bullocks and seven rams—a perfect sacrifice—at the close of the procession (ch. 16. 1). It is probable that preparations had been made for the offering of similar sacrifices at regular intervals along the way. **27. A robe of fine linen**—*Heb.*, Butz—is rather supposed in the later books to denote cotton. **an ephod**—A shoulder garment, a cincture or cape over his dress. It was worn by the priests, but was not so peculiar to them as to be forbidden others (1 Samuel, 2. 18; 22. 18). **29. Michal . . . saw . . . David dancing and playing**—His movements would be slow and solemn, suitable to the grave and solemn character of the music. Though his royal robes were laid aside, he was attired like the other officials, showing a becoming humil-

ky in the immediate presence of God. The feelings manifested by Michal were only an ebullition of spleen from a proud and passionate woman.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**1-6. DAVID'S FESTIVAL SACRIFICE, AND LIBERALITY TO THE PEOPLE.** 2. **he blessed the people in the name of the Lord**—the king commended their zeal, supplicated the Divine blessing upon them, and ordered the remains of the thank-offerings which had been profusely sacrificed during the procession, to be distributed in certain proportions to every individual, that the ceremonial might terminate with appropriate festivities (Deuteronomy, 12. 7). 3. **flagon of wine**—the two latter words are a supplement by our translators, and the former is, in other versions, rendered not a "flagon," but a "cake," a confection, as the *Septuagint* renders it, made of flour and honey. 4-6. **he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord**—No sooner was the ark deposited in its tent than the Levites, who were to officiate in the choirs before it, entered upon their duties; a select number of the musicians being chosen for the service from the list (ch. 15. 19-21) of those who had taken a prominent part in the recent procession. The same arrangement was to be observed in their duties, now that the ark was again stationary; Asaph, with his associates, composing the first or principal company, played with cymbals; Zechariah and his colleagues, with whom were conjoined Jeiel and Obededom, forming the second company, used harps and similar instruments. 5. **Jeiel**—is the same as Aziel (ch. 15. 20). 6. **Benaiah also and Jahaziel**—the name of the former is mentioned among the priests (ch. 15. 24), but not the latter. The office assigned to them was that of blowing the trumpets at regular intervals before the ark and in the tabernacle.

**7-43. HIS PSALM OF THANKSGIVING.** 7. **Then on that day David delivered first this Psalm**—Among the other preparations for this solemn inauguration, the royal bard had composed a special hymn for the occasion. Doubtless it had been previously in the hands of Asaph and his assistants, but it was now publicly committed to them as they entered for the first time on the performance of their sacred duties. It occupies the greater part of this chapter (v. 8-36), and seems to have been compiled from other Psalms of David, previously known to the Israelites, as the whole of it will be found with very slight variations in Psalm, 96. 105. 1-15; 106. 47, 48. In the form, however, in which it is given by the sacred historian, it seems to have been the first psalm given for use in the tabernacle service; and abounding, as it does, with the liveliest ascriptions of praise to God for the revelation of His glorious character and the display of His marvelous works; containing, as it does, so many pointed allusions to the origin, privileges and peculiar destiny of the chosen people, it was admirably calculated to animate the devotions and call forth the gratitude of the assembled multitude. 36. **all the people said, Amen**—(Cf.

Psalm, 72. 19, 20; 106. 48). In the former, the author of the doxology utters the amen himself, while in the latter the people are exhorted to say amen. This may arise from the fact that the latter psalm originally concluded with the injunction to say amen. But in this historical account of the festival, it was necessary to relate that the people obeyed this injunction on the occasion referred to, and therefore the words "let them praise" were altered into "and they praised." [BERTHEAU.] 37-42. **So he left there, before the covenant of the Lord, Asaph and his brethren, &c.**—The sequel of the chapter describes the appointment of the sacred musicians and their respective duties. 38. **Obed-edom with their brethren**—Hosah, mentioned at the close of the verse, and a great number besides (see ch. 26). **to be porters**—door-keepers. 39, 40. **And Zadok . . . before the tabernacle . . . at Gibeon**—While the officers above mentioned, under the superintendence of Abiathar, were appointed to officiate in Jerusalem, whither the ark had been brought—Zadok and the priests subordinate to him were stationed at Gibeon to perform the sacred service before the ancient tabernacle which still remained there. **continually morning and evening**—as the law enjoined (Exodus, 29. 38; Numbers, 28. 3, 6). **and do according to all that is written in the law**—(see Numbers, 28). Thus, in the time of David, the worship was performed at two places, where the sacred things that had been transmitted from the age of Moses were preserved. Before the ark in Jerusalem, Asaph and his brethren officiated as singers—Obed-edom and Chosah served as door-keepers—Benaiah and Jehaziel blew the trumpets—while at the tabernacle and burnt-offering in Gibeon, Heman and Jeduthun presided over the sacred music; the sons of Jeduthun were door-keepers, and Zadok, with his suite of attendant priests, offered the sacrifices.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**1-16. DAVID FORBIDDEN TO BUILD GOD AN HOUSE. I. As David sat in his house**—The details of this chapter were given in nearly similar terms (2 Samuel, 7). The date was toward the latter end of David's reign, for it is expressly said in the former book to have been at the cessation of all his wars. But as to narrate the preparations for the removal of the ark and the erection of the temple was the principal object of the historian, the exact chronology is not followed. 5. **I have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another**—The *lit.* rendering is, "I was walking in a tent and in a dwelling." The evident intention (as we may see from *v.* 6) was to lay stress upon the fact that God was a *Mithhallek* (a traveling God), and went from one place to another with his *tent* and his entire *dwelling* (the dwelling included not merely the tent, but the fore-courts with the altar of burnt-offerings, &c.) [BERTHEAU.] 6. **Spake I a word to any of the judges**—In 2 Samuel, 7. 7, it is "any of the tribes" of Israel. 3<sup>th</sup> are included. But the judges "who were commanded to feed the people," form the more suitable antithesis to David.

**Why have ye not built me a house of cedars?**—*i. e.*, a solid and magnificent temple. 7. **Thus saith the Lord, I took thee from the sheep-cote**—a round tower of rude construction, high walled, but open at the top, in which sheep are often inclosed at night to protect them from wild beasts. The meaning is, Elevated you to the throne from a humble condition solely by an act of Divine grace, and not from any antecedent merits of your own (see I Samuel, 16. 11), and enabled you to acquire renown, equal or superior to any other monarch. Your reign will be ever afterward regarded as the best and brightest era in the history of Israel, for it will secure to the nation a settled inheritance of prosperity and peace, without any of the oppressions or disorders that afflicted them in early times. 9, 10. **At the beginning and since the time I commanded judges**—*i. e.*, including the whole period from Joshua to Saul. **I tell thee, The Lord will build thee an house**—This was the language of Nathan himself, who was specially directed to assure David, not only of personal blessing and prosperity, but of a continuous line of royal descendants. 11. **I will raise up thy seed**—(2 Samuel, 7. 12). 13. **I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee**—My procedure in dealing with him will be different from my disposal of Saul. Should his misconduct call for personal chastisement, I shall spare his family. If I see it necessary to withdraw my favour and help for a time, it will be a corrective discipline only to reform and restore, not to destroy. (On this passage some have founded an argument for Solomon's repentance and return to God.) 14. **I will settle him in my house**—Over my people Israel. **and in my kingdom**—God here asserts His right of supreme sovereignty in Israel. David and Solomon, with their successors, were only the vicegerents whom He nominated, or, in His providence, permitted. **His throne shall be established for ever**—The posterity of David inherited the throne in a long succession—but not always. In such a connection as this, the phrase "for ever" is employed in a restricted sense (see Lamentations, 3. 31). We naturally expect the prophet to revert to David before concluding, after having spoken (*v.* 12) of the building of Solomon's temple. The promise that his house should be blessed was intended as a compensation for the disappointment of his wish to build the temple, and hence this assurance is appropriately repeated at the conclusion of the prophet's address. [BERTHEAU.] 15. **According to all... this vision**—The revelation of the Divine will was made to the prophet in a dream. 16. **David the king sat before the Lord, and said**—(see 2 Samuel, 7. 18-29).

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1, 2. **DAVID SUBDUES THE PHILISTINES AND MOABITES.** 1. **David took Gath and her towns**—The full extent of David's conquests in the Philistine territory is here distinctly stated, whereas in the parallel passage (2 Samuel, 8. 1) it was only described in a general way. Gath was the "Metheg-ammah," or "arm-bridle," as it is

there called—either from its supremacy as the capital over the other Philistine towns, or because, in the capture of that important place and its dependencies, he obtained the complete control of his restless neighbours. 2. **he smote Moab**—The terrible severities by which David's conquest of that people was marked, and the probable reason of their being subjected to such a dreadful retribution are narrated (2 Samuel, 8. 2). **the Moabites brought gifts**—*i. e.*, became tributary to Israel.

3-13. SMITES HADADEZER AND THE SYRIANS. 3. **Hadarezer**—Or Hadadezer (2 Samuel, 8. 3), which was probably the original form of the name, was derived from Hadad, a Syrian deity. It seems to have become the official and hereditary title of the rulers of that kingdom. **Zobah**—Its situation is determined by the words "unto" or "toward Hamath," a little to the north-east of Damascus, and is supposed by some to be the same place as in earlier times was called Hobah (Genesis, 14. 15). Previous to the rise of Damascus, Zobah was the capital of the kingdom which held supremacy among the petty states of Syria. **as he went to establish his dominions by the river Euphrates**—Some refer this to David, who was seeking to extend his possessions in one direction toward a point bordering on the Euphrates, in accordance with the promise (Genesis, 15. 18; Numbers, 24. 17). But others are of opinion that, as David's name is mentioned (*v.* 4), this reference is most applicable to Hadadezer. 4-8. **David took from him a thousand chariots**—(see 2 Samuel, 8. 3-14). In that passage David is said to have taken 700 horsemen, whereas here it is said that he took 7,000. This great discrepancy in the text of the two narratives seems to have originated with a transcriber in confounding the two Hebrew letters which indicate the numbers, and in neglecting to mark or obscure the points over one of them. We have no means of ascertaining whether 700 or 7,000 be the more correct. Probably the former should be adopted. [DAVIDSON'S HERM.] **but reserved of them an hundred chariots**—Probably to grace a triumphal procession on his return to Jerusalem, and, after using them in that way, destroy them like the rest. 8. **from Tibhath and from Chun**—These places are called Betah and Berothai (2 Samuel, 8. 8). Perhaps the one might be the Jewish, the other the Syrian name of these towns. Neither their situation nor the connection between them is known. The Arabic version makes them to be Emesa (now Hems) and Baal-beck, both of which agree very well with the relative position of Zobah. 9-13. **Tou**—or Toi, whose dominions border on those of Hadadezer (see 2 Samuel, 8. 9-12; 1 Kings, 11. 15). 17. **the Cherethites and the Pelethites**—Who formed the royal body-guard. The Cherethites were, most probably, those brave men who all along accompanied David while among the Philistines, and from that people derived their name (1 Samuel, 30. 14; Ezekiel, 25. 10; Zephaniah, 12. 5), as well as their skill in archery—while the Pelethites were those who joined him at Ziklag, took their name from Pelet, the chief man in the company (ch. 12. 3), and, being Benjamites, were expert in the use of the sling.



## CHAPTER XIX.

**1-5. DAVID'S MESSENGERS, SENT TO COMFORT HANUN, ARE DISGRACEFULLY TREATED.** 1. **after this**—This phrase seems to indicate that the incident now to be related took place immediately, or soon after the wars described in the preceding chapter. But the chronological order is loosely observed, and the only just inference that can be drawn from the use of this phrase is, that some farther account is to be given of the wars against the Syrians. **Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, died**—There had subsisted a very friendly relation between David and him, begun during the exile of the former, and cemented, doubtless, by their common hostility to Saul. 3. **are not his servants come unto thee for to search?**—*i. e.*, thy capital, Rabbah (2 Samuel, 10. 3). 4. **shaved them**—Not completely, but only the half of their face. This disrespect to the beard, and indecent exposure of their persons by their clothes being cut off from the girdle downward, was the grossest indignity to which Jews, in common with all Orientals, could be subjected. No wonder that the men were ashamed to appear in public—that the king recommended them to remain in seclusion on the border till the mark of their disgrace had disappeared—and then they might, with propriety, return to the court.

**6-15. JOAB AND ABISHAI OVERCOME THE AMMONITES.** 6. **when the children of Ammon saw that they made themselves odious to David**—One universal feeling of indignation was roused throughout Israel, and all classes supported the king in his determination to avenge this unprovoked insult on the Hebrew nation. **Hanun . . . sent a thousand talents of silver**—A sum equal to £342,100, to procure the services of foreign mercenaries. **chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia . . . Syria-maachah and . . . Zobah**—The Mesopotamian troops did not arrive during this campaign (*v.* 16). Syria-maachah lay on the north of the possessions of the Trans-jordanic Israelites, near Gilead. **Zobah**—(see ch. 18. 3). 7. **they hired thirty and two thousand chariots**—*Heb.*, riders or cavalry, accustomed to fight either on horseback or in chariots, and occasionally on foot; and, accepting this as the true rendering, the number of hired auxiliaries mentioned in this passage agrees exactly with the statement in 2 Samuel. 10. 6. 20,000, 12,000 (from Tob), equal to 32,000, and 1,000 with the king of Maachah. 8. **David . . . sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men**—The whole forces of Israel, including the great military orders, were engaged in this war. 9. **children of Ammon put the battle in array before the gate of the city**—*i. e.*, outside the walls of Medebah, a frontier town on the Arnon. **the kings that were come were by themselves in the field**—The Israelitish army being thus beset by the Ammonites in front, and by the Syrian auxiliaries behind, Joab resolved to attack the latter—the more numerous and formidable host—while he directed his brother Abishai, with a suitable attachment, to attack the Ammonites. Joab's address before the engagement displays the faith and piety

that became a commander of the Hebrew people. The mercenaries being defeated, the courage of the Ammonites failed ; so that, taking flight, they entrenched themselves within the fortified walls.

**16-19. SHOPHACH SLAIN BY DAVID.** 16. **And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worst** (see 2 Samuel, 10. 15-19). 18. **David slew of the Syrians seven thousand men**—(Cf. 2 Samuel, 10. 18, which has seven hundred chariots). Either the text in one of the books is corrupt [KEIL, DAVIDSON], or the accounts must be combined, giving this result, 7,000 horsemen, 7,000 chariots, and 40,000 footmen. [KENNICOTT, HOUBIGANT, CALMET.]

## CHAPTER XX.

**1-3. RABBAH BESIEGED BY JOAB, SPOILED BY DAVID, AND THE PEOPLE TORTURED.** 1. **at the time when kings go out to battle**—in spring, the usual season in ancient times for entering on a campaign ; *i. e.*, a year subsequent to the Syrian war. **Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country . . . of Ammon**—The former campaign had been disastrous, owing chiefly to the hired auxiliaries of the Ammonites ; and as it was necessary as well as just, that they should be severely chastised for their wanton outrage on the Hebrew ambassadors, Joab ravaged their country, invested their capital, Rabbah, and having, after a protracted siege, taken one part of it, the lower town or “city of waters,” insulated by the winding course of the Jabbok :—he knowing that the fort called “the royal city” would soon fall, invited the king to come in person, and have the honour of storming it. The knowledge of this fact (mentioned 2 Samuel, 12. 26), enables us to reconcile the two statements—“David tarried at Jerusalem” (*v.* 1), and “David and all the people returned to Jerusalem” (*v.* 3). 2. **David took the crown of their king, and found it to weigh a talent of gold**—Equal to 125 pounds. Some think that *Malcom*, rendered in our version “their king,” should be taken as a proper name, Milcom, or Molech, the Ammonite idol, which, of course, might bear a heavy weight. But, like many other state crowns of Eastern kings, the crown got at Rabbah was not worn on the head, but suspended by chains of gold above the throne. **precious stones**—*Heb.*, a stone, or cluster of precious stones which was set on David’s head. 3. **cut them with saws, &c.**—The *Heb.* word “cut them,” is, with the difference of the final letter, the same as that rendered “put them,” in the parallel passage of Samuel ; and many consider that putting them to saws, axes, &c., means nothing more than that David condemned the inhabitants of Rabbah to hard and penal servitude.

**4-8. THREE OVERTHROWS OF THE PHILISTINES, AND THREE GIANTS SLAIN.** 4. **war at Geza**—Or Gob (see 2 Samuel, 21. 18-22).

## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-13. DAVID SINS IN NUMBERING THE PEOPLE. 1. Satan stood up against Israel**—God, by withdrawing His grace at this time from David (see 2 Samuel, 24. 1), permitted the tempter to prevail over him, and as the result of this successful temptation was the entail of a heavy calamity as a punishment from God upon the people, it might be said that “Satan stood up against Israel.” **number Israel**—In the act of taking the census of a people, there is not only no evil but much utility. But numbering Israel—that people who were to become as the stars for multitude, implying a distrust of the Divine promise, was a sin; and though it had been done with impunity in the time of Moses, at that enumeration each of the people had contributed “half-a-shekel toward the building of the tabernacle,” that there might be no plague among them when he numbered them (Exodus, 30. 12). Hence the numbering of that people was, in itself, regarded as an undertaking by which the anger of God could be easily aroused; but when the arrangements were made by Moses for the taking of the census, God was not angry, because the people were numbered for the express purpose of the tax for the sanctuary, and the money which was thus collected (“the atonement money,” Exodus, 30. 16), appeased Him. Every thing depended, therefore, upon the design of the census. [BERTHEAU]. The sin of David numbering the people, consisted in its being either to gratify his pride to ascertain the number of warriors he could muster for some meditated plan of conquest, or, perhaps, more likely still, to institute a regular and permanent system of taxation, which he deemed necessary to provide an adequate establishment for the monarchy, but which was regarded as a tyrannical and oppressive exaction—an innovation on the liberty of the people—a departure from ancient usage unbecoming a king of Israel. **3. why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?**—or bring an occasion of punishment on Israel. In *Heb.*, the word sin is often used synonymously with the punishment of sin. In the course of Providence, the people frequently suffer for the misconduct of their rulers. **5. Joab gave the sum of the number of the children of Israel**—It amounted to one million one hundred thousand men in Israel, capable of bearing arms, inclusive of the 300,000 military (ch. 27), which, being already enlisted in the royal service, were not reckoned (2 Samuel, 24. 9), and to 470,000 men in Judah, omitting 30,000 which formed an army of observation stationed on the Philistine frontier (2 Samuel, 6. 1). So large a population at this early period, considering the limited extent of the country and comparing it with the earlier census (Numbers, 26), is a striking proof of the fulfillment of the promise (Genesis, 15. 5). **6. Levi and Benjamin counted he not**—If this census was ordered with a view to the imposition of taxes, this alone would account for Levi, who were not warriors (*v.* 5) not being numbered (see Numbers, 1. 47-55). The population of Benjamin had been taken (see ch. 7. 6-11) and the register preserved in the

archives of that tribe. This, however, was taken on another occasion and by other agency than that of Joab. The non-numbering of these two tribes might have originated in the special and gracious providence of God, partly because Levi was devoted to His service and Benjamin had become the least of all the tribes (Judges, 21); and partly because God foresaw that they would remain faithful to the house of David in the division of the tribes, and, therefore, would not have them diminished. [POOLE.] From the course followed in this survey (see 2 Samuel, 24. 4-8), it would appear that Judah and Benjamin were the last tribes that were to be visited, and that, after the census in Judah had been finished, Joab, before entering on that of Benjamin, had to return to Jerusalem, where the king, now sensible of his great error, gave orders to stop all further proceedings in the business. Not only the remonstrance of Joab at the first, but his slow progress in the survey (2 Samuel, 24. 8), showed the strong repugnance and even horror of the old general at this unconstitutional measure. 9. **the Lord spake unto Gad, David's seer**—Although David was himself endowed with a prophetic gift, yet, in matters relating to himself or his kingdom, he was in the habit of consulting the Lord through the medium of the priests, and when he failed to do so, a prophet was sent on extraordinary occasions to admonish or chastise him. Gad, a private friend, was occasionally employed as the bearer of these prophetic messages. 11, 12. **Choose thee, &c.**—To the *three* evils these correspond in beautiful agreement: **three years, three months, three days.** [BERTHEAU.] (See 2 Samuel, 24. 13.) 13. **let me fall now into the hand of the Lord . . . let me not fall into the hand of man**—Experience had taught him that human passion and vengeance had no bounds, whereas our wise and gracious Father in heaven knows the kind, and regulates the extent, of chastisement which every one needs. 14, 15. **So the Lord . . . sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it**—The infliction only of the pestilence is here noticed, without any account of its duration or its ravages, while a minute description is given of the visible appearance and menacing attitude of the destroying angel. **stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite**—Ornan was probably his Hebrew or Jewish, Araunah his Jebusite or Canaanitish name. Whether he was the old king of Jebus, as that title is given to him (2 Samuel, 24. 23), or not, he had been converted to the worship of the true God, and was possessed both of property and influence. 16. **David and the elders . . . clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces**—They appeared in the garb, and assumed the attitude of humble penitents, confessing their sins, and deprecating the wrath of God.

18-30. HE BUILDS AN ALTAR. 18. **the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say**—The order about the erection of an altar, as well as the indication of its site, is described (2 Samuel, 24. 18), as brought directly by Gad. Here we are informed of the quarter whence the prophet got his commission. It is only in the later stages of Israel's history, that we find angels employed in communicating the Divine will to the prophets. 20, 21. **Ornan was**

**threshing wheat** — If the census was entered upon in autumn, the beginning of the civil year—the nine and a half months it occupied would end at wheat-harvest. The common way of threshing corn is by spreading it out on a high level area, and driving backward and forward upon it two oxen harnessed to a clumsy sledge with three rollers and some sharp spikes. The driver sits on his knees on the box, while another peasant is employed in drawing back the straw and separating it from the grain underneath. By this operation the chaff is very much chopped, and the grain threshed out. 28. **I give thee . . . the threshing instruments for wood**—*i. e.*, to burn the sacrifice of the oxen. Very little of the real import—the *haste*, and the *value* of the present offered—can be understood in this country. The offering was made for *instant* use. Ornam, hereby hoping to terminate the pestilence without a moment's delay. 'gave all," oxen, the large threshing machine, and the wheat. 25. **David . . . gave for the place six hundred shekels of gold**—At first he bought only the cattle and the threshing instruments, for which he paid fifty shekels of silver (2 Samuel, 24. 24), afterward he purchased the whole property, Mount Moriah, on which the future temple stood. High in the center of the mountain platform rises a remarkable rock, now covered by the dome of "the Sakrah." It is irregular in its form, and measures about sixty feet in one direction, and fifty feet in the other. It is the natural surface of Mount Moriah, and is thought by many to be the rock of the threshing-floor of Araunah, selected by David, and continued by Solomon and Zerubbabel as "the unhewn stone" on which to build the altar. [BARTLETT'S "WALKS ABOUT JERUSALEM." STANLEY.] 26. **David built there an altar**—He went in procession with his leading men from the royal palace, down Mount Zion, and through the intervening city; and, having plenty of space on his own property, he was commanded, under peremptory direction, to go a considerable distance from his home, up Mount Moriah, to erect an altar on premises which he had to buy. It was on or close to the spot where Abraham had offered up Isaac. **answered him by fire from heaven**—(see Leviticus, 9. 24; 1 Kings, 18. 21-23; 2 Kings, 1. 12; 2 Chronicles, 7. 1). 28. **when David saw that the Lord had answered him, he sacrificed there**—Or he continued to sacrifice there. Perceiving his sacrifice was acceptable, he proceeded to make additional offerings there, and seek favour by prayer and expiatory rites—for the dread of the menacing angel destroying Jerusalem while he was absent in the center of worship at Gibeon, especially reverence for the Divine Being led him to continue his adorations in that place which God (2 Chronicles, 3. 1) had hallowed by the tokens of His presence and gracious acceptance.

## CHAPTER XXII.

I-5. DAVID PREPARES FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE. 1. **David said, This is the house of the Lord God**—By the miraculous sign of fire from heaven, and perhaps other intimations, David under-

stood it to be the will of God that the national place of worship should be fixed there, and he forthwith proceeded to make preparations for the erection of the temple on that spot. 2. **David commanded to gather together the strangers**—Partly the descendants of the old Canaanites (2 Chronicles, 8. 7-10), from whom was exacted a tribute of bond-service, and partly war captives (2 Chronicles, 2. 7) reserved for the great work he contemplated.

6-19. HE INSTRUCTS SOLOMON. 6. **Then he called for Solomon . . . and charged him**—The earnestness and solemnity of this address creates an impression that it was given a little before the old king's decease. He unfolded his great and long-cherished plan, enjoined the building of God's house as a sacred duty on him as his son and successor, and described the resources that were at command for carrying on the work. The vast amount of personal property he had accumulated, in the precious metals, must have been spoil taken from the people he had conquered, and the cities he had sacked.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

I. DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING. I. **when David was old . . . he made Solomon King**—This brief statement, which comprises the substance of I Kings, I. 32-48, is made here solely to introduce an account of the preparations carried on by David during the latter years of his life for providing a national place of worship.

2-6. NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE LEVITES. 2. **he gathered together all the princes of Israel**—All important measures relating to the public interest were submitted for consideration to a general assembly of the representatives of the tribes (ch. 13. 1; 15. 25; 22. 17; 26). 3. **the Levites were numbered . . . thirty and eight thousand**—Four times their number at the early census taken by Moses (see Numbers, 4 and 26). It was, in all likelihood, this vast increase that suggested and rendered expedient that classification, made in the last year of David's reign, which the present and three subsequent chapters describe. **by their polls, man by man**—Women and children were not included. 4. **twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord**—They were not to preside over all the services of the temple. The Levites were subject to the priests, and they were superior to the Nethinims and other servants, who were not of the race of Levi. But they had certain departments of duty assigned, some of which are here specified. 5. **praised the Lord with the instruments which I made**—David seems to have been an inventor of many of the musical instruments used in the temple (Amos, 6. 5). 6. **David divided them into courses among the sons of Levi**—These are enumerated according to their fathers' houses, but no more of these are mentioned here than the 24,000 who were engaged in the work connected with the Lord's house. The fathers' houses of those Levites correspond with the classes into which they [JOSEPHUS' ANTIQUITIES], as well as the priests, were divided [see ch. 24. 29-31; 20. 20-28].

**7-II. SONS OF GERSHON.** 7-II. **the Gershonites**— They had nine fathers' houses, six descended from Laadan and three from Shimej.

**12-20. OF KOHATH.** 12. **The sons of Kohath**— He was the founder of nine Levitical fathers' houses. 13. **Aaron was separated**— As high priest (see ch. 25. 1-19). 14. **concerning Moses**— His sons were ranked with the Levites generally, but not introduced into the distinctive portion of the descendants of Levi who were appointed to the special functions of the priesthood.

**21-23. OF MERARI.** 21-23. **The sons of Merari**— They comprised six fathers' houses. Summing them together, Gershon founded nine fathers' houses, Kohath nine and Merari six; total, twenty-four.

**24. OFFICE OF THE LEVITES.** 24. **These were the sons of Levi . . . that did the work . . . from twenty years and upward**— The enumeration of the Levites was made by David (*v.* 3), on the same rule as that followed by Moses (Numbers, 4. 3), viz., from thirty years. But he saw afterward that this rule might be beneficially relaxed and that the enrollment of Levites for their proper duties might be made from twenty years of age. The ark and tabernacle being now stationary at Jerusalem, the labour of the Levites was greatly diminished, as they were no longer obliged to transport its heavy furniture from place to place. The number of 38,000 Levites, exclusive of priests was, doubtless, more than sufficient for the ordinary service of the tabernacle. But this pious king thought that it would contribute to the glory of the Lord to employ as many officers in His Divine service as possible. These first rules, however, which David instituted were temporary, as very different arrangements were made after the ark had been deposited in the tabernacle of Zion.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**1-19. DIVISIONS OF THE SONS OF AARON INTO FOUR AND TWENTY ORDERS.** 1. **Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron**— (see ch. 23. 6). 2. **Nadab and Abihu died before their father**—*i. e.*, not in his presence, but during his life-time (see *Marg. Ref.*). **therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office**— In consequence of the death of his two eldest sons without issue, the descendants of Aaron were comprised in the families of Eleazar and Ithamar. Both of these sons discharged the priestly functions as assistants to their father. Eleazar succeeded him, and in his line the high priesthood continued until it was transferred to the family of Ithamar, in the person of Eli. 3. **Zadok . . . and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar**— This statement, taken in connection with *v.* 6, is not a little perplexing, since (2 Samuel, 15. 24. 35; 20. 25) Abiathar is mentioned as the person conjoined in David's time with Zadok, in the collegiate exercise of the high priesthood. Some think that the words have been transposed, reading Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. But there is no ground for regarding the text as faulty. The high priests of the line of

Ithamar were the following: Ahiah or Ahimelech, his son Abiathar, his son Ahimelech. We frequently find the grandfather and grandson called by the same name (see List of High Priests of Line of Eleazar, ch. 5. 30-41). Hence the author of the Chronicles was acquainted with Ahimelech, son of Abiathar, who, for some reason, discharged the duties of high priest in David's reign, and during the life-time of his father (for Abiathar was living in the time of Solomon, I Kings, 2. 27). [KIEL.] 4. **there were more chief men found**—The *Heb.* may be translated, "There were more men as to heads of the sons of Eleazar." It is true, in point of fact, that by the census the number of individuals belonging to the family of Eleazar was found greater than in that of Ithamar. And this, of necessity, led to there being more fathers' houses, and consequently more chiefs or presidents in the former. 5. **they were driven by lot**—This method of allocation was adopted manifestly to remove all cause of jealousy as to precedence and the right of performing particular duties. 6. **one principal household**—The *marg.* reading is preferable, "one house of the father." The lot was cast in a deliberate and solemn manner in presence of the king, the princes, the two high priests, and the chiefs of the priestly and Levitical families—the heads of families belonging to Eleazar and Ithamar were alternately brought forward to draw, and the name of each individual, as called, registered by an attendant secretary. To accommodate the casting of the lots to the inequality of the numbers, there being sixteen fathers' houses of Eleazar, and only eight of Ithamar, it was arranged that every house of Ithamar, or what is the same thing, that every two houses of Eleazar should be followed by one of Ithamar. If, then, we suppose a common method to have been made by Eleazar, the order would be as follows: One and two, Eleazar; three, Ithamar; four and five, Eleazar; six, Ithamar; seven and eight, Eleazar; nine, Ithamar, and so forth. [BERTHEAU.] The lot determined also the order of the priests' service. That of the Levites was afterward distributed by the same arrangement (*v.* 31).

## CHAPTER XXV.

1-7. NUMBER AND OFFICE OF THE SINGERS. 1. **David and the captains of the host**—*i. e.*, the princes (ch 23. 2; 24. 6). It is probable that the king was attended on the occasion of arranging the singers by the same parties that are mentioned as having assisted him in regulating the order of the priests and Levites. 2. **according to the order of the king**—*Heb.*, "by the hands of the king," *i. e.*, "according to the king's order," under the personal superintendence of Asaph and his colleagues. **which prophesied**—*i. e.*, in this connection, played with instruments. This metaphorical application of the term "prophecy," most probably originated in the practice of the prophets, who endeavoured to rouse their prophetic spirit by the animating influence of music (see 2 Kings, 3. 15). It is said that Asaph did this "according to David's order," because, by royal appointment, he officiated in the tabernacle



on Zion (ch. 16. 37-41), while other leaders of the sacred music were stationed at Gibeon. 5. **Heman the king's seer**—The title of seer or prophet of David is also given to Gad (ch. 21. 9), and to Jeduthun (2 Chronicles, 29. 15), in the words (*marg. matters*) of God. **to lift up the horn**—*i. e.*, to blow loudly in the worship of God; or perhaps it means nothing more than that he presided over the wind instruments, as Jeduthun over the harp. Heman had been appointed at first to serve at Gibeon (ch. 16. 41). But his destination seems to have been changed at a subsequent period. **God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters**—The daughters are mentioned, solely because from their musical taste and talents they formed part of the choir (Psalm, 68. 25). 6, 7. **all these were under the hands of their father**—Asaph had four sons, Jeduthun six, and Heman fourteen, equal to twenty-four; making the musicians, with their brethren the singers, an amount of 288. For, like the priests and Levites, they were divided into twenty-four courses of twelve men each, equal to 288, who served a week in rotation; and these, half of whom officiated every week with a proportionate number of assistants, were skillful and experienced musicians, capable of leading and instructing the general musical corps, which comprised no less than 4,000 (ch. 23. 5).

8-31. **THEIR DIVISION BY LOT INTO FOUR AND TWENTY ORDERS.**  
8. **they cast lots, ward against ward**—"Ward" is an old English word for division or company. The lot was cast to determine the precedence of the classes or divisions over which the musical leaders presided; and, in order to secure an impartial arrangement of their order, the master and his assistants, the teacher and his scholars, in each class or company, took part in this solemn casting of lots. In the first catalogue given in this chapter, the courses are classed according to their employment as musicians; in the second they are arranged in the order of their service.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1-12. **DIVISIONS OF THE PORTERS.** 1, 2. **Concerning the divisions of the porters**—There were 4,000 (ch. 23. 6), all taken from the families of the Kohathites and Merarites (*v.* 14), divided into twenty-four courses—as the priests and musicians. **Meshelemiah the sons of Kore, of the sons of Asaph**—Seven sons of Meshel-emia are mentioned (*v.* 2), whereas eighteen are given (*v.* 9), but in this latter number his relatives are included. 5. **God blessed him**—*i. e.*, Obed-edom. The occasion of the blessing was his faithful custody of the ark (2 Samuel, 6. 11, 12), and the nature of the blessing (Psalm 127. 5) consisted in the great increase of progeny by which his house was distinguished; seventy-two descendants are reckoned. 6. **Mighty men of valour**—The circumstance of physical strength is prominently noticed in this chapter, as the office of the porters required them not only to act as sentinels of the sacred edifice and its precious furniture against attacks of plunderers or popular insurrection—to be, in fact, a military guard—but, after the temple was built, to open and shut

the gates which were extraordinarily large and ponderous. 10. **Simri the chief . . . though . . . not the first-born**—Probably because the family entitled to the right of primogeniture had died out, or because there were none of the existing families which could claim that right. 12. **Among these were the divisions of the porters, even among the chief men**—These were charged with the duty of superintending the watches, being heads of the twenty-four courses of porters.

13-16. **THE GATES ASSIGNED BY LOT.** 13. **They cast lots**—Their departments of duty, such as the gates they should attend to, were allotted in the same manner as those of the other Levitical bodies, and the names of the chiefs or captains are given, with the respective gates assigned them. 15. **The house of Asuppim**—Or collections, probably a storehouse, where were kept the grain, wine and other offerings for the sustenance of the priests. 16. **The gate Shallecheth**—Probably the rubbish gate, through which all the accumulated filth and sweepings of the temple and its courts were poured out. **by the causeway of the going up**—Probably the ascending road which was cast up or raised from the deep valley between Mount Zion and Moriah, for the royal egress to the place of worship (2 Chronicles, 9. 4). **ward against ward**—Some refer these words to Shuppim and Hosah, whose duty it was to watch both the western gate and the gate Shallecheth, which was opposite, while others take it as a general statement applicable to all the guards, and intended to intimate that they were posted at regular distances from each other, or that they all mounted and relieved guard at the same time in uniform order. 17-19. **Eastward were six Levites**—Because the gate there was the most frequented. Four at the north gate; four at the south, at the storehouse which was adjoining the south, and which had two entrance-gates, one leading in a south-westerly direction to the city, and the other direct west, two porters each—at the Parbar toward the west, there were six men posted—four at the causeway or ascent (*v.* 16), and two at Parbar, amounting to twenty-four in all, who were kept daily on guard. **Parbar**—Is, perhaps, the same as Parvar (suburbs, 2 Kings, 23. 11), and, if so, this gate might be so called as leading to the suburbs. [CALMET.]

20-28. **LEVITES THAT HAD CHARGE OF THE TREASURES.** 20. **Of the Levites, Ahijah**—The heading of this section is altogether strange as it stands, for it looks as if the sacred historian were going to commence a new subject different from the preceding. Besides, "Ahijah, whose name occurs after" the Levites, is not mentioned in the previous lists; it is totally unknown, and is introduced abruptly without further information; and, lastly, Ahijah must have united in his own person those very offices of which the occupants are named in the verses that follow. The reading is incorrect. The *Septuagint* has this very suitable heading, "And their Levitical brethren over the treasures," &c. [BERTHEAU.] The names of those who had charge of the treasure chambers at their respective wards are given with a general description of the precious things committed to their trust. Those treasures were immense, consisting of the accumulated spoils of Israelitish vic-

ories, as well as of voluntary contributions made by David and the representatives of the people.

**29-32. OFFICERS AND JUDGES.** 29. **Officers and judges**—The word rendered “officers,” is the term which signifies scribes or secretaries, so that the Levitical class here described were magistrates who, attended by their clerks, exercised judicial functions; there were 6,000 of them (ch. 23. 4) who probably acted like their brethren on the principle of rotation, and these were divided into three classes—one (*v.* 29) for the outward business over Israel; one (*v.* 30), consisting of 1,700, for the west of Jordan “in all business of the Lord, and in the service of the king;” and the third (*v.* 31, 32), consisting of 2,700, were “rulers for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king.”

## CHAPTER XXVII.

**1-15. TWELVE CAPTAINS FOR EVERY SEVERAL MONTH.** 1. **came in and went out month by month**—Here is an account of the standing military force of Israel. A militia formed, it would seem, at the beginning of David's reign (see *v.* 7), was raised in the following order: Twelve legions, corresponding to the number of tribes, were enlisted in the king's service. Each legion comprised a body of 24,000 men, whose term of service was a month in rotation and who were stationed either at Jerusalem or in any other place where they might be required. There was thus always a force sufficient for the ordinary purposes of State, as well as for resisting sudden attacks or popular tumults; and when extraordinary emergencies demanded a larger force, the whole standing army could easily be called to arms, amounting to 288,000 or to 300,000, including the 12,000 officers that naturally attended on the twelve princes (*v.* 16-24). Such a military establishment would be burdensome neither to the country nor to the royal exchequer; for attendance on this duty being a mark of honour and distinction, the expense of maintenance would be borne probably by the militiaman himself or furnished out of the common fund of his tribe. Nor would the brief period of actual service produce any derangement of the usual course of affairs; for, on the expiry of the term, every soldier returned to the pursuits and duties of private life during the other eleven months of the year. Whether the same individuals were always enrolled cannot be determined. The probability is, that provided the requisite number was furnished, no stricter scrutiny would be made. A change of men might, to a certain degree, be encouraged, as it was part of David's policy to train all his subjects to skill in arms; and to have made the enlistment fall always on the same individuals would have defeated that purpose, as to have confined each month's levy rigidly within the limits of one tribe, might have fallen hard upon those tribes which were weak and small. The rotation system being established, each division knew its own month as well as the name of the commander under whom it was to serve. These commanders are styled “The chief

fathers," *i. e.*, the hereditary heads of tribes who, like chieftains of clans, possessed great power and influence. **captains of thousands and hundreds**—The legions of 24,000 were divided into regiments of 1,000 and these again into companies of 100 men, under the direction of their respective subalterns, there being, of course, twenty-four captains of thousands and 240 centurions. **and their officers**—The Shoterim who, in the army, performed the duty of the commissariat, keeping the muster-roll, &c. 2, 3. **Jashobeam, the son of Zabdiel**—(see ch. II. 11; 2 Samuel, 23. 8). Hachmoni was his father, Zabdiel, probably one of his ancestors; or there might be different names of the same individual. In the rotation of the military courses the dignity of precedence, not of authority, was given to the hero. 4. **second month was Dodai**—or Dodo. Here the text seems to require the supplement of "Eleazar, the son of Dodo" (2 Samuel, 23. 9). 7. **Asahel**—This officer having been slain at the very beginning of David's reign, his name was probably given to this division in honour of his memory and his son was invested with the command.

**16-24. PRINCES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.** 16. **Over the tribes of Israel: the ruler**—This is a list of the hereditary chiefs or rulers of tribes at the time of David's numbering the people. Gad and Asher are not included, for what reason is unknown. The tribe of Levi had a prince (*v.* 17) as well as the other tribes; and although it was ecclesiastically subject to the high priest, yet, in all civil matters, it had a chief or head, possessed of the same authority and power as in the other tribes; only his jurisdiction did not extend to the priests. 18. **Elihu**—Probably the same as Eliab (1 Samuel, 16. 16). 23. **But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under**—The meaning is, that the census which David ordered did not extend to all the Israelites; for to contemplate such an enumeration would have been to attempt an impossibility (Genesis, 28. 14); and, besides, would have been a daring offense to God. The limitation to a certain age was what had probably quieted David's conscience as to the *lawfulness* of the measure, while its *expediency* was strongly pressed upon his mind by the army arrangements he had in view. 24. **Neither was the number put in the account of the Chronicles of King David**—Either because the undertaking was not completed, Levi and Benjamin not having been numbered (ch. 21. 6), or the full details in the hands of the enumerating officers were not reported to David, and, consequently, not registered in the public archives. **the Chronicles**—Were the daily records or annals of the king's reign. No notice was taken of this census in the historical register, as from the public calamity with which it was associated it would have stood a painful record of the Divine judgment against the king and the nation. 25. **Over the king's treasures**—Those treasures consisted of gold, silver, precious stones, cedar-wood, &c.; those which he had *in* Jerusalem as distinguished from others *without* the city. **the storehouses in the fields**—Grain covered over with layers of straw is frequently preserved in the fields under little earthen mounds, like our potato pits. 27. **The vineyards**—These seem to have been in the vine-growing dis-

districts of Judah, and were committed to two men of that quarter. **wine-cellars**—Stores; the wine is deposited in jars sunk in the court of the house. 28. **Olive . . . and sycamore trees . . . in the low plains**—*i. e.*, the Shephela, the rich low-lying ground between the Mediterranean and the Mountains of Judah. 29. **Herds that fed in Sharon**—A fertile plain between Cesarea and Joppa. **sheep and camels**—These were, probably, in the countries east of the Jordan, and hence an Ishmaelite and Nazarite were appointed to take charge of them. 31. **Rulers of the substance that was King David's**—How and when the king acquired these demesnes and this variety of property; whether it was partly by conquests or partly by confiscation, or by his own active cultivation of waste lands, is not said. It was probably in all these ways. The management of the king's private possessions was divided into twelve parts, like his public affairs, and the revenue derived from all these sources mentioned must have been very large.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**1-8. DAVID EXHORTS THE PEOPLE TO FEAR GOD. 1. David assembled all the princes of Israel**—*i. e.*, the representatives of the people, the leading men of the kingdom, who are enumerated in this verse according to their respective rank or degree of authority. **princes of the tribes**—(ch. 27. 16-22). Those patriarchal chiefs are mentioned first as being the highest in rank—a sort of hereditary noblesse. **the captains of the companies**—The twelve generals mentioned (ch. 27. 1-15). **the stewards, &c.**—(ch. 27. 25-31). **the officers**—*Heb.*, eunuchs or attendants on the court (1 Samuel, 8. 15; 1 Kings, 22. 9; 2 Kings, 22. 18): and besides Joab, the commander-in-chief of the army, the heroes who had no particular office (ch. 11; 2 Samuel, 23). This assembly, a very mixed and general one, as appears from the parties invited, was more numerous and entirely different from that mentioned (ch. 23. 2). 2. **Hear me, my brethren**—This was the style of address becoming a constitutional king of Israel (Deuteronomy, 17. 20; 1 Samuel, 30. 23; 2 Samuel, 5. 1). **I had it in mine heart**—I proposed or designed. **to build an house of rest**—A solid and permanent temple. **for the footstool of our God**—God seated between the cherubim, at the two extremities of the ark, might be said to be enthroned in His glory, and the coverlet of the ark to be His footstool. **and had made ready for the building**—The immense treasures which David had amassed, and the elaborate preparations he had made, would have been amply sufficient for the erection of the temple of which he presented the model to Solomon. 3. **thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed much blood**—The church or spiritual state of the world, of which the temple at Jerusalem was to be a type, would be presided over by One who was to be pre-eminently the Prince of Peace, and, therefore, would be represented, not so fitly by David, whose mission had been a preparatory one of battle and conquest, as by his son, who should reign in unbroken peace. 4, 5. **he hath chosen Solo-**

**mon** — The spirit of David's statement is this : It was not my ambition, my valour, or my merit that led to the enthronement of myself and family ; it was the grace of God which chose the tribe, the family, the person — myself in the first instance, and now Solomon, to whom, as the Lord's anointed, you are all bound to submit. Like that of Christ, of whom he was a type, the appointment of Solomon to the kingdom above all his brethren was frequently pre-intimated (ch. 17. 12 ; 22. 9 ; 2 Samuel, 7. 12-14 ; 12. 24, 25 ; 2 Kings, 1. 13). 7. **I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do my commandments** — The same condition is set before Solomon by God (1 Kings, 3. 14 ; 9. 4). 8. **Now . . . in the sight of all Israel . . . keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord, &c.** — This solemn and earnest exhortation to those present, and to all Israel through their representatives, to continue faithful in observing the Divine law as essential to their national prosperity and permanence, is similar to that of Moses (Deuteronomy, 30. 15-20).

9-20. **HE ENCOURAGES SOLOMON TO BUILD THE TEMPLE.** 9, 10. **And thou, Solomon, my son** — The royal speaker now turns to Solomon, and in a most impressive manner presses upon him the importance of sincere and practical piety. **know thou** — He did not mean head knowledge, for Solomon possessed that already, but that experimental acquaintance with God which is only to be obtained by loving and serving him. 11. **Then David gave to Solomon . . . the pattern** — He now put into the hands of his son and successor, the plan or model of the temple, with the elevations, measurements, apartments, and chief articles of furniture, all of which were designed according to the pattern given him by Divine revelation (*v.* 19). 12. **the pattern of all that he had by the spirit** — Rather, with him in spirit ; *i. e.*, was floating in his mind. 15, 16. **the candlesticks of silver** — Solomon made them all of gold — in this and in a few minor particulars, departing from the letter of his father's instructions, where he had the means of executing them in a more splendid style. There was only one candlestick and one table in the tabernacle, but ten in the temple. 18. **the chariot of the cherubim** — The expanded wings of the cherubim formed what was figuratively styled the throne of God, and, as they were emblematical of rapid motion, the throne or seat was spoken of as a chariot (Psalm, 18. 10 ; 99. 1). It is quite clear that in all these directions David was not guided by his own taste, or by a desire for making any existing model of architecture, but solely by a regard to the express revelation of the Divine will. In a vision, or trance, the whole edifice, with its appurtenances, had been placed before his eyes so vividly and permanently, that he had been able to take a sketch of them in the models delivered to Solomon. 20. **Be strong and of good courage** — The address begun (*v.* 9), is resumed and concluded in the same strain. 21. **behold the courses of the priests and Levites** — They were, most probably, represented in this assembly, though they are not named. **also the princes and all the people** — *i. e.*, as well as the skillful, expert and zealous artisan, as the workman who needs to be directed in all his labours.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

**1-9. DAVID CAUSES THE PRINCES AND PEOPLE TO OFFER FOR THE HOUSE OF GOD. 1. Solomon . . . is yet young and tender.**—Though Solomon was very young when he was raised to the sovereign power, his kingdom escaped the woe pronounced (Ecclesiastes, 10. 16). Mere childhood in a prince is not always a misfortune to a nation, as there are instances of the government being wisely administered during a minority, and Solomon himself is a most illustrious proof that a young prince may prove a great blessing; for when he was but a mere child, with respect to his age, no nation was happier. His father, however, made this address before Solomon was endowed with the Divine gift of wisdom, and David's reference to his son's extreme youth, in connection with the great national undertaking he had been Divinely appointed to execute, was to apologize to this assembly of the estates—or, rather, to assign the reason of his elaborate preparations for the work. **3, 4. Moreover . . . I have of mine own proper good, &c.**—In addition to the immense amount of gold and silver treasure which David had already bequeathed for various uses in the service of the temple, he now made an additional contribution destined to a specific purpose—that of overlaying the walls of the house. This voluntary gift was from the private fortune of the royal donor, and had been selected with the greatest care. The gold was “the gold of Ophir,” then esteemed the purest and finest in the world (Job, 22. 24; 28. 16; Isaiah, 13. 12). The amount was 3,000 talents of gold, and 7,000 talents of refined silver. **5. who then is willing to consecrate his service**—*Heb.*, fill his hand; *i. e.*, make an offering (Exodus, 32. 29; Leviticus, 8. 33; 1 Kings, 13. 33). The meaning is, that whoever would contribute voluntarily, as he had done, would be offering a free-will offering unto the Lord. It was a sacrifice which every one of them could make, and in presenting which the offerer himself would be the priest. David, in asking free-will offerings for the temple, imitated the conduct of Moses in reference to the tabernacle (Exodus, 25. 1-8). **6-8. Then the chief of the fathers—Or heads of the fathers (ch. 24. 31; 27. 17). princes of the tribes—(ch. 27. 16-22). the rulers of the king's work**—Those who had charge of the royal demesnes and other possessions (ch. 27. 25-31). **offered willingly**—Influenced by the persuasive address and example of the king, they acted according to their several abilities and their united contributions amounted to the gross sum—of gold, 5,000 talents and 10,000 drams; and of silver, 10,000 talents, besides brass and iron. **drams**—Rather, *darics*, a Persian coin, with which the Jews from the time of the captivity became familiar, and which was afterward extensively circulated in the countries of Western Asia. It is estimated as equal in value to 25*s.* of British currency. **7. of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron**—In scripture, iron is always referred to as an article of comparatively low value, and of greater abundance and cheaper than bronze. [NAPIER.]

8. and they with whom precious stones were found — Rather, "whatever was found along with it, of precious stones they gave." [BERTHEAU.] These gifts were deposited in the hands of Jehieli, whose family were charged with the treasures of the house of the Lord (ch. 26-21).

10-25. HIS THANKSGIVING. 10. **Wherefore David blessed the Lord** — This beautiful thanksgiving prayer was the effusion overflowing with gratitude and delight at seeing the warm and widespread interest that was now taken in forwarding the favourite project of his life. Its piety is displayed in the fervour of devotional feeling — in the ascription of all worldly wealth and greatness to God as the giver, in tracing the general readiness in contributing to the influence of His grace, in praying for the continuance of this happy disposition among the people, and in solemnly and earnestly commending the young king and his kingdom to the care and blessing of God. 16. **All this store that we have prepared** — It may be useful to exhibit a tabular view of the treasure laid up, and contributions stated by the historian as already made toward the erection of the proposed temple. Omitting the brass and iron, and precious stones, which, though specified partly (*v.* 7), is represented in other portions as "without weight" (ch. 22. 3, 14). We shall give in this table only the amount of gold and silver; and taking the talent of gold as worth £5,475 (the talent being 125 pounds in weight), the value of the gold will be about 73s. per oz. The talent of silver is given at £342 3s. 9d., or 4s. 4½d per oz. The total amount of the contributions will be:

Sum accumulated, and in the	} gold,	£547,500,000
public treasury (ch. 22. 41) -		
Contributed by David from his	} gold,	16,425,000
private resources, - - -		
Contributed by the assembled	} gold,	28,000,000
rulers, - - - - -		
		<hr/> £939,929,687

Though it has been the common practice of Eastern monarchs to hoard vast sums for the accomplishment of any contemplated project, this amount so far exceeds not only every Oriental collection on record, but even the bounds of probability, that it is very generally allowed that either there is a corruption of the text in ch. 22. 14, or that the reckoning of the historian was by the Babylonian, which was only a half, or the Syrian, which was only a fifth part of the Hebrew, talent. This would bring the Scripture account more into accordance with the statements of Josephus, as well as within the range of credibility. 20. **All the congregation worshipped the Lord, and the king** — Though the external attitude might be the same, the sentiments of which it was expressive were very different in the two cases — of Divine worship in the one, of civil homage in the other. 21, 22. **they sacrificed . . . And did eat and drink** — After the business of the assembly was over, the people, under the exciting influence of the occasion, still remained, and next day engaged in the performance of solemn rites, and afterward feasted on the remainder of the sacrifices.



before the Lord — Either in the immediate vicinity of the ark, or, perhaps, rather in a religious and devout spirit, as partaking of a sacrificial meal. **made Solomon . . . king the second time** — In reference to the first time which was done precipitately on Adonijah's conspiracy (1 Kings, 1. 35). **they . . . anointed . . . Zadok** — The statement implies that his appointment met the popular approval. His elevation as sole high priest was on the disgrace of Abiathar, one of Adonijah's accomplices. 23. **Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord** — As king of Israel, he was the Lord's vicegerent. 24. **submitted themselves** — *Heb.*, put their hands under Solomon, according to the custom still practiced in the East, of putting a hand under the king's extended hand, and kissing the back of it (2 Kings, 10. 15).

26-30. HIS REIGN AND DEATH. 26. **Thus David reigned** — (See 1 Kings, 2. 11).



MOLOCH.

THE SECOND BOOK  
OF  
THE CHRONICLES.

CHAPTER I.

**1-6. SOLEMN OFFERING OF SOLOMON AT GIBEON.** 2. **Then Solomon spake unto all Israel**—viz., the heads, or leading officers, that are afterward specified, were summoned to attend their sovereign in a solemn religious procession. The date of this occurrence was the second year of Solomon's reign, and the high place at Gibeon was chosen for the performance of the sacred rites, from the tabernacle and all the ancient furniture connected with the national worship being deposited there. Zadok was the officiating high priest (1 Chronicles, 16. 39). It is true that the ark had been removed, and placed in a new tent which David had made for it at Jerusalem. But the brazen altar, "before the tabernacle of the Lord," on which the burnt offerings were appointed by the law to be made, was at Gibeon; and although David had been led by extraordinary events and tokens of the Divine presence to sacrifice on the threshing-floor of Araunah, Solomon considered it his duty to present his offerings on the legally appointed spot "before the tabernacle," and on the time-honoured altar prepared by the skill of Bezaleel in the wilderness (Exodus, 38. 1). 6. **offered a thousand burnt-offerings**—This holocaust he offered, of course, by the hands of the priests. The magnitude of the oblation became the rank of the offerer on this occasion of national solemnity.

**7-13. HIS CHOICE OF WISDOM IS BLESSED BY GOD.** 7. **in that night did God appear unto Solomon**—(see 1 Kings, 3. 5).

**14-17. HIS STRENGTH AND WEALTH.** 14. **Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen**—His passion for horses was greater than that of any Israelitish monarch before or after him. His stud comprised 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. This was a prohibited indulgence, whether as an instrument of luxury or power. But it was not merely for his own use that he imported the horses of Egypt. The immense equestrian establishment he erected was not for show merely, but also for profit. The Egyptian breed of horses was highly valued; and, being as fine as Arabians, but larger and more powerful, they were well fitted for being yoked in chariots. These were light, but compact and solid vehicles, without springs. From the price stated (*v.* 17), as given for a chariot and a horse, it appears that the chariot cost four times the value of a horse. A horse brought 150 shekels, which, estimating the shekel at 2s. 3d. or 2s. 6d., amount to £17 2s. or £18. 15s., while a chariot brought 600 shekels, equal to £68 9s. or £75; and as an Egyptian chariot was usually drawn by two horses, a chariot and pair would cost £112 sterling. As the Syrians, who were fond of the Egyptian breed of horses, could import them into their own country only through Judea, Solomon early perceived the commercial advan-

tages to be derived from this trade and established a monopoly. His factors or agents purchased them in the markets or fairs of Egypt and brought them to the "chariot cities"—the depots and stables he had erected on the frontiers of his kingdom, such as Beth-marcaboth, "the house of chariots," and Hazor-Susah, "the village of horses" (Joshua, 19. 5; I Kings, 10. 28). 17. **brought . . . for all the kings of the Hittites**—A branch of this powerful tribe, when expelled from Palestine, had settled north of Lebanon where they acquired large possessions contiguous to the Syrians.

## CHAPTER II.

## 1, 2. SOLOMON'S LABOURERS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE. 1.

**Solomon determined to build**—The temple is the grand subject of this narrative, while the palace—here and in other parts of this book—is only incidentally noticed. The duty of building the temple was reserved for Solomon before his birth. As soon as he became king he addressed himself to the work, and the historian, in proceeding to give an account of the edifice, begins with relating the preliminary arrangements.

## 3-10. HIS MESSAGE TO HURAM FOR SKILLFUL ARTIFICERS. 3

**Solomon sent to Hiram**—The correspondence was probably conducted on both sides in writing (*v.* II; see, also, I Kings, 5. 8). **As thou didst deal with David my father**—This would seem decisive of the question whether the Hiram then reigning in Tyre was David's friend (see I Kings, 5. 1-6). In opening the business, Solomon grounded his request for Tyrian aid on two reasons: 1. The temple he proposed to build must be a solid and permanent building because the worship was to be continued in perpetuity, and therefore the building materials required to be of the most durable quality. 2. It must be a magnificent structure, because it was to be dedicated to the God who was greater than all gods; and, therefore, as it might seem a presumptuous idea to erect an edifice for a Being "whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain," it was explained that Solomon's object was not to build an house for Him to dwell in, but a temple in which His worshippers might offer sacrifices to His honour. No language could be more humble and appropriate than this. The pious strain of sentiment was such as became a king of Israel. 7. **Send me now, therefore, a man cunning to work**—Masons and carpenters were not asked for; those whom David had obtained (I Chronicles, 14. 1) were, probably, still remaining in Jerusalem, and had instructed others. But he required a master of works; a person capable, like Bezaleel (Exodus, 35. 31), of superintending and directing every department; for, as the division of labour was at that time little known or observed, an overseer had to be possessed of very versatile talents and experience. The things specified in which he was to be skilled, relate not to the building, but the furniture of the temple. Iron, which could not be obtained in the wilderness when the tabernacle was built, was now, through intercourse with the coast, plentiful and much used. The colors intended for

curtains were, from the crimson or scarlet-red and hyacinth colours named, evidently those stuffs, for the manufacture and dying of which the Tyrians were so famous. "The graving," probably, included embroidery of figures like cherubims in needlework, as well as wood carving of pomegranates and other ornaments. 8. **Send me . . . cedar trees, &c.** — The cedar and cypress were valued as being both rare and durable; the alghum or almug trees (likewise a foreign wood), though not got on Lebanon, is mentioned as being procured through Hiram (see 1 Kings, 10. 11). 10. **Behold, I will give thy servants beaten wheat** — Wheat, stripped of the husk, boiled and saturated with butter, forms a frequent meal with the labouring people in the East (Cf. 1 Kings, 5. 11). There is no discrepancy between that passage and this. The yearly supplies of wine and oil, mentioned in the former, were intended for Hiram's court in return for the cedars sent him; while the articles of meat and drink specified here were for the workmen on Lebanon.

11-18. **HURAM'S KIND ANSWER.** 11. **Because the Lord hath loved his people, &c.** — This pious language creates a presumption that Hiram might have attained some knowledge of the true religion from his long familiar intercourse with David. But the presumption, however pleasing, may be delusive (see 1 Kings, 5. 7-12). 13, 14. **I have sent a cunning man** — (see 1 Kings, 7. 13-51). 17, 18. **Solomon numbered all the strangers, &c.** — (see 1 Kings, 5. 13, 18).

### CHAPTER III.

1-2. **PLACE AND TIME OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE.** 1. **Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David** — These words seem to intimate that the region where the temple was built was *previously* known by the name of Moriah (Genesis, 22. 2), and do not afford sufficient evidence for affirming, as has lately been done [STANLEY], that the name was *first* given to the Mount in consequence of the vision seen by David. Mount Moriah was one summit of a range of hills which went under the general name of Zion. The platform of the temple is now, and has long been, occupied by the Haram, or sacred inclosure, within which stand the three mosques of Omar (the smallest) of El Aksa, which in early times was a Christian Church, and of Kubbet el Sakhara, "The dome of the rock," so called from a huge block of limestone rock in the center of the floor, which, it is supposed, formed the elevated threshing-floor of Araunah, and on which the great brazen altar stood. The site of the temple, then, is so far established, for an almost universal belief is entertained in the authenticity of the tradition regarding the rock El Sakhara, and it has also been conclusively proved that the area of the temple was identical on its western, eastern and southern sides, with the present inclosure of the Haram. [ROBINSON.] "That the temple was situated *somewhere* within the oblong inclosure on Mount Moriah, all topographers are agreed, although there is not the slightest vestige of the sacred fane now remaining; and the greatest diversity of sentiment pre-

vails as to its exact position within that large area, whether in the center of the Haram, or in its southwest corner. [BARCLAY.] Moreover, the full extent of the temple area is a problem that remains to be solved, for the platform of Mount Moriah being too narrow for the extensive buildings and courts attached to the sacred edifice, Solomon resorted to artificial means of enlarging and leveling it, by erecting vaults, which, as Josephus states, rested on immense earthen mounds raised from the slope of the hill. It should be borne in mind at the outset, that the grandeur of the temple did not consist in its colossal structure, so much as in its internal splendour, and the vast courts and buildings attached to it. It was not intended for the reception of a worshipping assembly, for the people always stood in the outer courts of the sanctuary.

**3-7. MEASURE AND ORNAMENTS OF THE HOUSE.** 3. **these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God**—By the written plan and specifications given him by his father. The measurements are reckoned by cubits, "after the first measure," *i. e.*, the old Mosaic standard. But there is great difference of opinion about this, some making the cubit eighteen, others twenty-one inches. The temple, which embodied in more solid and durable materials the ground form of the tabernacle, only being twice as large, was a rectangular building seventy cubits long from east to west, and twenty cubits wide from north to south. 4. **the porch**—The breadth of the house, whose length ran from east to west, is here given as the measure of the length of the piazza. The portico would thus be from thirty to thirty-five feet long, and from fifteen to seventeen and a half feet broad. **the height was an hundred and twenty cubits**—This, taking the cubit at eighteen inches, would be 180 feet; at twenty-one inches, 210 feet; so that the porch would rise in the form of a tower, or two pyramidal towers, whose united height was 120 cubits, and each of them about 90 or 105 feet high. [STIEGLITZ.] This porch would thus be like the propylaum or gateway of the palace of Khorsabad [LAYARD], or at the temple of Edfou. 5. **the greater house**—*i. e.*, the holy place, the front or outer chamber (see I Kings, 6. 17). 6. **he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty**—Better, he paved the house with precious and beautiful marble. [KITTO.] It may be, after all, that these were stones with veins of different colours for decorating the walls. This was an ancient and thoroughly Oriental kind of embellishment. There was an under pavement of marble, which was covered with planks of fir. The whole interior was lined with boards, richly decorated with carved work, clusters of foliage and flowers, among which the pomegranate and lotus, or water-lily, were conspicuous; and overlaid, excepting the floor, with gold, either by gilding or in plates (I Kings, 6).

**8-13. DIMENSIONS, &C., OF THE MOST HOLY HOUSE.** 8. **the most holy house**—It was a perfect cube (Cf. I Kings, 6. 20). **overlaid it with . . . gold, amounting to six hundred talents**—at £4 per oz., equal to £3,600,000. 10-13. **two cherubims**—These figures in the tabernacle were of pure gold (Exodus, 25), and overshadowed the mercy-seat. The two placed in the temple were

made of olive wood, overlaid with gold. They were of colossal size, like the Assyrian sculptures; for each, with expanded wings, covered a space of ten cubits in height and length—two wings touched each other, while the other two reached the opposite walls; their faces were inward, *i. e.*, toward the most holy house, conformably to their use, which was to veil the ark.

**14-17. VEIL AND PILLARS** (see 1 King, 6. 21). The united height is here given; and though the exact dimensions would be thirty-six cubits, each column was only seventeen cubits and a half, a half cubit being taken up by the capital or the base. They are probably described as they were lying together in the mould before they were set up. [POOLE]. They would be from eighteen to twenty-one feet in circumference and stand forty feet in height. These pillars or obelisks, as some call them, were highly ornamented and formed an entrance in keeping with the splendid interior of the temple.

#### CHAPTER IV.

**1. ALTAR OF BRASS.** 1. **he made an altar of brass**—Steps must have been necessary for ascending so elevated an altar, but the use of these could be no longer forbidden (Exodus, 20. 26), after the introduction of an official costume for the priests (Exodus, 28. 42). It measured thirty-five feet by thirty-five and in height seventeen and a half feet. The thickness of the metal used for this altar is no where given; but supposing it to have been three inches the whole weight of the metal would not be under 200 tons. [NAPIER.]

**2-5. MOLTEN SEA.** 2. **he made a molten sea**—(see 1 Kings, 7. 23-26), as in that passage “knops” occur instead of “oxen;” it is generally supposed that the rows of ornamental knops were in the form of ox heads. 3. **Two rows of oxen were cast when it was cast**—The meaning of which is, that the circular basin and the brazen oxen which supported it, were all of one piece, being cast in one and the same mould. There is a difference in the accounts given of the capacity of this basin, for while in 1 Kings, 7. 26, it is said that 2,000 baths of water could be contained in it, in this passage no less than 3,000 are stated. It has been suggested that there is here a statement, not merely of the quantity of water which the basin held, but that also which was necessary to work it, to keep it flowing as a fountain; that which was required to fill both it and its accompaniments. In support of this view it may be remarked that different words are employed; the one in 1 Kings, 7. 26, rendered *contained*; the two here rendered, *received* and *held*. There was a difference between *receiving* and *holding*. When the basin played as a fountain and all its parts were filled for that purpose the latter, together with the sea itself, *received* 3,000 baths; but the sea exclusively *held* only 2,000 baths, when its contents were restricted to those of the circular basin. It *received* and *held* 3,000 baths. [CALMET'S FRAGMENT.]

**6-18. THE TEN LAVERS, CANDLESTICKS AND TABLES.** 6. **ten lavers**—(see 1 Kings, 7. 27-39). The laver of the tabernacle had

probably been destroyed. The ten new ones were placed between the porch and the altar, and while the molten sea was for the priests to cleanse their hands and feet, these were intended for washing the sacrifices. 7. **ten candlesticks** — (see I Kings, 7. 49). The increased number was not only in conformity with the characteristic splendour of the edifice, but to be a standing emblem to the Hebrews, that the growing light of the word was necessary to counteract the growing darkness in the world. [LIGHTFOOT,] 11. **Huram made** — (see I Kings, 7. 40-45).

## CHAPTER V.

1. THE DEDICATED TREASURES. I. **Solomon brought in all things that David his father had dedicated** — The immense sums and the store of valuable articles which his father and other generals had reserved and appropriated for the temple (I Chronicles, 22. 14; 26. 26).

2-10. BRINGING UP OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. 2, 3. **Then Solomon assembled . . . in the feast which was in the seventh month** — The feast of the dedication of the temple was on the eighth day of that month. This is related word for word, the same as in I Kings, 8. 1-10. 9. **there it is unto this day** — *i. e.*, at the time when this history was composed; for after the Babylonish captivity there is no trace of either ark nor staves. 11. **all the priests that were present . . . did not then wait by course** — The rotation system of weekly service introduced by David was intended for the ordinary duties of the priesthood; on extraordinary occasions, or when more than wonted solemnity attached to them, the priests attended in a body. 12. **the Levites which were the singers** — On great and solemn occasions, such as this, a full choir was required, and their station was taken with scrupulous regard to their official parts; the family of Heman occupied the central place, the family of Asaph stood on his right, and that of Jeduthun on his left; the place allotted to the vocal department being a space between the court of Israel and the altar in the east and of the priests' court. **with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets** — The trumpet was always used by the priests, and in the Divine service it was specially employed in calling the people together during the holy solemnities, and in drawing attention to new and successive parts of the ritual. The number of trumpets used in the Divine service could not be less than two (Numbers, 10. 2), and their greatest number never exceeded the precedent set at the dedication of the temple. The station where the priests were sounding with trumpets was apart from that of the other musicians; for while the Levite singers occupied an orchestra east of the altar, the priests stood at the marble table on the south-west of the altar. There both of them stood with their faces to the altar. The manner of blowing the trumpets was, first, by a long plain blast, then by one with breakings and quaverings, and then by a long, plain blast again. [BROWN'S JEWISH ANTIQUITIES.] 13. **the house was filled with a cloud** — (see I Kings, 8. 10, 11).

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-13. SOLOMON BLESSES THE PEOPLE, AND PRAISES GOD. 1.** **The Lord hath said that he would dwell in thick darkness**—This introduction to Solomon's address was evidently suggested by the remarkable incident recorded at the close of the last chapter; the phenomena of a densely opaque and uniformly shaped cloud, descending in a slow and majestic manner, and filling the whole area of the temple. He regarded it himself, and directed the people also to regard it, as an undoubted sign and welcome pledge of the Divine presence and acceptance of the building reared to His honour and worship. He referred not to any particular declaration of God, but to the cloud having been all along in the natural history of Israel the recognized symbol of the Divine presence (Exodus, 16. 10; 24. 16; 40. 34; Numbers, 9. 15; 1 Kings, 8. 10, 11). **13. Solomon had made a brazen scaffold**—A sort of platform, but the *Hebrew* term rendered scaffold, being the same as that used to designate the bason, suggests the idea that this throne might bear some resemblance, in form or structure, to those lavers in the temple, being a sort of round and elevated pulpit, placed in the middle of the court, and in front of the altar of burnt offering. **upon it he stood and kneeled down upon his knees**—After ascending the brazen scaffold, he assumed those two attitudes in succession, and with different objects in view. He stood while he addressed and blessed the surrounding multitude (*v.* 3-11), afterward he knelt down and stretched out his hands toward heaven, with his face probably turned toward the altar, while he gave utterance to the beautiful and impressive prayer which is recorded in the remainder of this chapter. It is deserving of notice that there was no seat in this pulpit—for the king either stood or knelt all the time he was in it. It is not improbable that it was surmounted by a canopy, or covered by a veil, to screen the royal speaker from the rays of the sun. **18-21. how much less this house which I have built! Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant**—No person who entertains just and exalted views of the spiritual nature of the Divine Being will suppose that he can raise a temple for the habitation of Deity, as a man builds a house for himself. Nearly as improper and inadmissible is the idea that a temple can contribute to enhance the glory of God, as a monument may be raised in honour of a great man. Solomon described the true and proper use of the temple, when he entreated that the Lord "would hearken unto the supplications of His servant and His people Israel, which they should make toward this place." In short, the grand purpose for which the temple was erected was precisely the same as that contemplated by churches—to afford the opportunity and means of public and social worship, according to the ritual of the Mosaic dispensation—to supplicate the Divine mercy and favour—to render thanks for past instances of goodness, and offer petitions for future blessings (see 1 Kings, 8. 22-61). This religious design of the temple—the ONE temple in the world, is in fact its stand-



point of absorbing interest. 22. **If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house, &c.**—In cases where the testimony of witnesses could not be obtained, and there was no way of settling a difference or dispute between two people but by accepting the oath of the accused, the practice had gradually crept in, and had acquired the force of consuetudinary law—for the party to be brought before the altar, where his oath was taken with all due solemnity, together with the imprecation of a curse to fall upon himself if his disavowal should be found untrue. There is an allusion to such a practice in this passage. 38. **If they return to thee . . . in the land of their captivity . . . and pray toward their land which thou gavest unto their fathers**—These words gave rise to the favourite usage of the ancient as well as modern Jews, of turning in prayer toward Jerusalem, in whatever quarter of the world they might be, and of directing their faces toward the temple when in Jerusalem itself, or any part of the Holy Land (1 Kings, 8. 44). 41. **Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place**—These words are not found in the record of this prayer in the First Book of Kings; but they occur in the 132d Psalm, which is generally believed to have been composed by David, or rather by Solomon, in reference to this occasion. “Arise,” is a very suitable expression to be used when the ark was to be removed from the tabernacle in Zion to the temple on Mount Moriah. **into thy resting place**—The temple is so called (Isaiah, 66. 1), because it was a fixed and permanent mansion (Psalm 132. 14). **the ark of thy strength**—The abode by which thy glorious presence is symbolized, and whence thou dost issue thine authoritative oracles, and manifest thy power on behalf of thy people when they desire and need it. It might well be designated the ark of God’s strength, because it was through means of it the mighty miracles were wrought, and the brilliant victories were won, that distinguish the early annals of the Hebrew nation. The sight of it inspired the greatest animation into the breasts of His people, while it diffused terror and dismay through the ranks of their enemies (Cf. Psalm 78. 61). **let thy priests be clothed with salvation**—Or with righteousness (Psalm 132. 9), *i. e.*, be equipped not only with the pure white linen garments thou hast appointed for their robe of office, but also adorned with the moral beauties of true holiness, that their person and services may be accepted, both for themselves and all the people. Thus they would be “clothed with salvation,” for that is the effect and consequence of a sanctified character. 42. **Turn not away the face of thine anointed**—*i. e.*, of me, who by thy promise and appointment have been installed as king and ruler of Israel. The words are equivalent in meaning to this:—Do not reject my present petitions; do not send me from thy throne of grace dejected in countenance and disappointed in heart. **remember the mercies of David thy servant**—*i. e.*, the mercies promised to David, and, in consideration of that promise, hear and answer my prayer (Cf. Psalm 132. 10).

## CHAPTER VII.

**1-3. GOD GIVES TESTIMONY TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER; THE PEOPLE WORSHIP.** 1. **the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering** — Every act of worship was accompanied by a sacrifice. The preternatural stream of fire kindled the mass of flesh, and was a token of the Divine acceptance of Solomon's prayer (see Leviticus, 9. 24; 1 Kings, 18. 38). **the glory of the Lord filled the house** — *i. e.*, the cloud which was the symbol of God's presence and majesty, filled the interior of the temple (Exodus, 40. 35). 2. **The priests could not enter** — Both from awe of the miraculous fire that was burning on the altar, and from the dense cloud that enveloped the sanctuary, they were unable, for some time, to perform their usual functions (see 1 Kings, 8. 10, 11). But afterward, their courage and confidence being revived, they approached the altar, and busied themselves in the offering of an immense number of sacrifices. 3. **all the children of Israel . . . bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement** — This form of prostration, *viz.*, that of lying on one's knees with the forehead touching the earth, is the manner in which the Hebrews, and Orientals in general, express the most profound sentiments of reverence and humility. The courts of the temple were densely crowded on the occasion, and the immense multitude threw themselves on the ground. What led the Israelites suddenly to assume that prostrate attitude on the occasion referred to, was the spectacle of the symbolical cloud, slowly and majestically descending upon the temple, and then entering it.

**4-11. SOLOMON'S SACRIFICES.** 4. **Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices** — Whether the individual worshippers slaughtered their own cattle, or a certain portion of the vast number of the Levitical order in attendance performed that work, as they sometimes did, in either case the offerings were made through the priests, who presented the blood and the fat upon the altar (see 1 Kings, 8. 62-64). 5. **So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God** — The ceremonial of dedication consisted principally in the introduction of the ark into the temple, and in the sacrificial offerings that were made on a scale of magnitude suitable to the extraordinary occasion. All present, the king, **the people** and the priests took part according to their respective stations, in the performance of the solemn service. The duty, of course, devolved chiefly on the latter, and hence in proceeding to describe their several departments of work, the historian says, generally "the priests waited on their offices:" while great numbers would be occupied with the preparation and offering of the victims, others sounded with their trumpets, and the different bands of the Levites praised the Lord with vocal and instrumental music, by the 136th Psalm, the oft-recurring chorus of which is, "for His mercy endureth forever." 7. **Solomon hallowed the middle of the court** — On this extraordinary occasion, when a larger number of animals were offered than one altar and the usual place of rings to which the animals were bound would admit of, the whole space was

taken in that was between the place of rings and the west end of the court to be used as a temporary place for additional altars, on that part of the spacious court holocausts were burning all round. 8. **Solomon kept the feast seven days**—The time chosen for the dedication of the temple was immediately previous to the feast of tabernacles (see 1 Kings, 8. 1-12). That season, which came after the harvest, corresponding to our September and October, lasted seven days, and during so prolonged a festival there was time afforded for the offering of the immense sacrifices enumerated. A large proportion of these were peace-offerings, which afforded to the people the means of festive enjoyment. **all Israel . . . from the entering in of Hamath**—*i. e.*, the defile at Lebanon. **unto the river of Egypt**—*i. e.*, Rhinocorura, now \*El Arish, the south boundary of Palestine. 10. **on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month**—This was the last day of the feast of tabernacles.

12-22. **GOD APPEARS TO HIM.** 12. **the Lord appeared to Solomon by night**—(see 1 Kings, 9. 1-9). The dedication of the temple must have been an occasion of intense national interest to Solomon and his subjects. Nor was the interest merely temporary or local. The record of it is read and thought of with an interest that is undiminished by the lapse of time. The fact that this was the only temple of all nations in which the *true God* was worshipped, imparts a moral grandeur to the scene, and prepares the mind for the sublime prayer that was offered at the dedication. The pure theism of that prayer—its acknowledgment of the unity of God as well as of His moral perfections in providence and grace, came from the same Divine source as the miraculous fire. They indicated sentiments and feelings of exalted and spiritual devotion, which sprang not from the unaided mind of man, but from the fountain of revelation. The reality of the Divine presence was attested by the miracle, and that miracle stamped the seal of truth upon the theology of the temple worship.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1-6. **SOLOMON'S BUILDINGS.** 2. **cities which Hiram had restored . . . Solomon built them, &c.**—These cities lay in the north-west of Galilee, and, though included within the limits of the promised land, had never been conquered. The right of occupying them Solomon granted to Hiram, who, after consideration, refused them as unsuitable to the commercial habits of his subjects (see 1 Kings, 9. 11). Solomon having wrested them from the possession of the Canaanite inhabitants repaired them, and filled them with a colony of Hebrews. 3-6. **Solomon went to Hamath-zobah**—Hamath was on the Orontes in Cæle-Syria. Its king, Toi, had been the ally of David; but, from the combination, Hamath and Zobah, it would appear that some revolution had taken place which led to the union of these two petty kingdoms of Syria into one. For what cause the resentment of Solomon was provoked against it, we are not informed, but he sent an

armed force which reduced it. He made himself master also of Tadmor, the famous Palmyra, in the same region — various other cities along the frontiers of his extended dominions he repaired and fitted up, either to serve as store-places for the furtherance of his commercial enterprises, or to secure his kingdom from foreign invasion (see ch. 1. 14; 1 Kings, 9. 15-24).

**7-11. THE CANAANITES MADE TRIBUTARIES.** 7. **all the people that were left, &c.** — The descendants of the Canaanites who remained in the country, were treated as war prisoners, being obliged to “pay tribute, or to serve as galley slaves” (ch. 2. 18), while the Israelites were employed in no works but such as were of an honourable character. 10. **two hundred and fifty that bare rule** — (Cf. 1 Kings, 9. 23). It is generally agreed that the text of one of these passages is corrupt. 11. **Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David, unto the house he had built for her** — On his marriage with the Egyptian princess at the beginning of his reign, he assigned her a temporary abode in the city of David, *i. e.*, Jerusalem, until a suitable palace for his wife had been erected. While that palace was in progress, he himself lodged in the palace of David, but he did not allow her to occupy it, because he felt that she being a heathen proselyte, and having brought from her own country an establishment of heathen maid-servants, there would have been an impropriety in her being domiciled in a mansion which was or had been hallowed by the reception of the ark. It seems she was received on her arrival into his mother's abode (Song, 3. 4; 8. 2).

**15-18. SOLOMON'S FESTIVAL SACRIFICES.** 15. **they departed not from the commandment of the king** — *i. e.*, David, in any of his ordinances, which by Divine authority he established, either in regulating the courses of the priests and Levites, or in the destination of his accumulated treasures to the construction and adornment of the temple. 17. **Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth** — These two maritime ports were situated at the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, now called the Gulf of Akaba. Eloth is seen in the modern Akaba, Ezion-geber in El Gudyan. [ROBINSON.] Solomon, determined to cultivate the arts of peace, was sagacious enough to perceive that his kingdom could become great and glorious only by encouraging a spirit of commercial enterprise among his subjects; and, accordingly, with that view, he made a contract with Hiram for ships and seamen, to instruct his people in navigation. 18. **Hiram sent him . . . ships** — Either sent him ship-men, able seamen, overland; or, taking the word “sent” in a looser sense, *supplied* him, *i. e.*, *built* him ships, *viz.*, in docks at Eloth (Cf. 1 Kings, 9. 26, 27). This navy of Solomon was manned by Tyrians, for Solomon had no seamen capable of performing distant expeditions. The Hebrew fishermen, whose boats plied on the Sea of Tiberias, or coasted the shores of the Mediterranean, were not equal to the conducting of large vessels laden with valuable cargoes on long voyages, and through the wide and unfrequented ocean. **four hundred and fifty talents of gold** — (Cf. 1 Kings, 9. 28). The text in one of these passages is corrupt.

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-12. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON; SHE ADMIRES HIS WISDOM AND MAGNIFICENCE. 1. when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon** — (see 1 Kings, 10. 1-13). It is said that among the things in Jerusalem which drew forth the admiration of Solomon's royal visitor, was "his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord." This was the arched viaduct that crossed the valley from Mount Zion to the opposite hill. In the commentary on the passage quoted above, allusion was made to the recent discovery of its remains. Here we give a full account of what, for boldness of conceptions, for structure and magnificence, was one of the greatest wonders in Jerusalem. "During our first visit to the south-west corner of the area of the mosque, we observed several of the large stones jutting out from the western wall, which at first seemed to be the effect of a bursting of the wall from some mighty shock or earthquake. We paid little regard to this at the moment; but, on mentioning the fact not long after to a circle of our friends, the remark was incidentally dropped that the stones had the appearance of having once belonged to a large arch. At this remark, a train of thought flashed cross my mind, which I hardly dared to follow out, until I had again repaired to the spot, in order to satisfy myself with my own eyes, as to the truth or falsehood of the suggestion. I found it even so. The courses of these immense stones occupy their original position; their external surface is hewn to a regular curve; and, being fitted one upon another, they form the commencement or foot of an immense arch, which once sprung out from this western wall in a direction toward Mount Zion, across the Tyropæan valley. This arch could only have belonged to the bridge, which, according to Josephus, led from this part of the temple to the Xystus (covered colonnade) on Zion; and it proves incontestably the antiquity of that portion from which it springs. [ROBINSON.] The distance from this point to the steep rock of Zion he calculates to be about 350 feet, the probable length of this ancient viaduct. Another writer adds, that "the arch of this bridge, if its curve be calculated with an approximation to the truth, would measure *sixty* feet, and must have been one of *five*, sustaining the viaduct (allowing for the abutments on either side), and that the piers supporting the center arch of this bridge must have been of great altitude — not less, perhaps, than 130 feet. The whole structure, when seen from the southern extremity of the Tyropæan, must have had an aspect of grandeur, especially as connected with the lofty and sumptuous edifices of the temple, and of Zion to the right and to the left. [ISAAC TAYLOR'S EDITION OF TRAIL'S JOSEPHUS.]

**13-28. HIS RICHES. 13. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year** — (see 1 Kings, 10. 14-29). **six hundred and three score and six talents of gold** — The sum named is equal to £3,646,350; and if we take the proportion of silver (*v.* 14), which is not taken into consideration, at 1 to 9, there would be

about £200,000, making a yearly supply of nearly £6,000,000, being a vast amount for an infant effort in maritime commerce. [NAPIER.] 21. **The king's ships went to Tarshish**—Rather "the king's ships of Tarshish went" with the servants of Hiram. **ships of Tarshish**—*i. e.*, in burden and construction like the large vessels built for, or used at, Tarshish. [CALMET'S FRAGMENTS.] 25. **Solomon had four thousand stalls**—It has been conjectured [GESENIUS' HEBREW LEXICON] that the original term may signify not only stall or stable, but a number of horses occupying the same number of stalls. Supposing that ten were put together in one part, this would make 40,000. According to this theory of explanation, the historian in Kings refers to horses, while the historian in Chronicles speaks of the stalls in which they were kept. But more recent critics reject this mode of solving the difficulty; and regarding the 4,000 stalls as in keeping with the general magnificence of Solomon's establishments, are agreed in considering the text in Kings as corrupt, through the error of some copyist. 28. **They brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt**—(see ch. I. 17). Solomon undoubtedly carried the Hebrew kingdom to its highest pitch of worldly glory, and his completion of the grand work, the centralizing of the national worship at Jerusalem, whither the natives went up three times a year, has given his name a prominent place in the history of the ancient church. But his reign had a disastrous influence upon "the peculiar people," and the example of his deplorable idolatries, the connections he formed with foreign princes, the commercial speculations he entered into, and the luxuries introduced into the land, seem in a great measure to have altered and deteriorated the Jewish character.

## CHAPTER X.

## 1-15. REHOBAM REFUSING THE OLD MEN'S GOOD COUNSEL.

1. **Rehoboam went to Shechem**—(see I Kings, 12. 1). This chapter is, with a few verbal alterations, the same as in that Book. 3. **And they sent**—rather, "for they had sent," &c. This is stated as the reason of Jeroboam's return from Egypt. 7. **If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them**—In the Book of Kings the words are: "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people, and wilt serve them." The meaning in both is the same, *viz.*, if thou wilt make some reasonable concessions, redress their grievances and restore their abridged liberties, thou wilt secure their strong and lasting attachment to thy person and government. 15. **the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was of God**—Rehoboam, in following an evil counsel and the Hebrew people in making a revolutionary movement, each acted as free agents, obeying their own will and passions. But God, who permitted the revolt of the northern tribes, intended it as a punishment of the house of David for Solomon's apostasy. That event demonstrates the immediate superintendence of His providence over the revolutions of king-

doms, and thus it affords an instance, similar to many other striking instances that are found in Scripture, of Divine predictions, uttered long before, being accomplished by the operation of human passions and in the natural course of events.

## CHAPTER XI.

**1-17. REHOBAM, RAISING AN ARMY TO SUBDUCE ISRAEL, IS FORBIDDEN BY SHEMAIAH.** 1-4. **Rehoboam gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel**—(see 1 Kings, 12. 21-24). 5. **built cities for defense in Judah**—This is evidently used as the name of the southern kingdom. Rehoboam, having now a bitter enemy in Israel, deemed it prudent to lose no time in fortifying several cities that lay along the frontier of his kingdom. Jeroboam, on his side, took a similar precaution (1 Kings, 12. 25). Of the fifteen cities named, Aijalon, now Yalo, and Zorah, now Surah, between Jerusalem and Jabneh [ROBINSON] lay within the province of Benjamin. Gath, though a Philistine city, had been subject to Solomon. And Etham, which was on the border of Simeon, now incorporated with the kingdom of Israel, was fortified to repel danger from that quarter. These fortresses Rehoboam placed under able commanders, and stocked them with provisions and military stores sufficient, if necessary, to stand a siege. In the crippled state of his kingdom, he seems to have been afraid lest it might be made the prey of some powerful neighbours. 13-17. **the priests and the Levites . . . resorted to him out of all their coasts**—this was an accession of moral power, for the maintenance of the true religion is the best support and safeguard of any nation; and as it was peculiarly the grand source of the strength and prosperity of the Hebrew monarchy, the great numbers of good and pious people who sought an asylum within the territories of Judah contributed greatly to consolidate the throne of Rehoboam. The cause of so extensive an emigration from the kingdom of Israel was the deep and daring policy of Jeroboam, who set himself to break the national unity by entirely abolishing, within his dominions, the religious institutions of Judaism. He dreaded an eventual reunion of the tribes, if the people continued to repair thrice a year to worship in Jerusalem as they were obliged by law to do; and, accordingly, on pretense that the distance of that city was too great for multitudes of his subjects, he fixed upon two more convenient places, where he established a new mode of worshipping God under gross and prohibited symbols. The priests and Levites, refusing to take part in the idolatrous ceremonies, were ejected from their livings; and along with them a large body of the people who faithfully adhered to the instituted worship of God—offended and shocked by the impious innovations—departed from the kingdom. 15. **he ordained him priests**—the persons he appointed to the priesthood were low and worthless creatures (1 Kings, 12. 31; 13. 33); any were consecrated who brought a bullock and seven rams (ch. 13. 9; Exodus, 29. 37). **for the high places**—those favourite places

insignia having been plundered by the Egyptian conqueror, others were made of inferior metal, and kept in the guard-room of the palace, to be ready for use, as, notwithstanding the tarnished glory of the court, the old state etiquette was kept up on public and solemn occasions. An account of this conquest of Judah, with the name of "king of Judah," in the cartouche of the principal captive, according to the interpreters, is carved and written in hieroglyphics on the walls of the great palace of Karnak, where it may be seen at the present day. This sculpture is about 2,700 years old, and is of peculiar interest as a striking testimony from Egypt to the truth of Scripture history. 12. **when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him**—The promise contained (*v.* 7) was verified—Divine Providence preserved the kingdom in existence, a reformation was made in the court, while true religion and piety were diffused throughout the land.

13-16. HIS REIGN AND DEATH. 13. **Rehoboam strengthened himself . . . and reigned**—The Egyptian invasion had been a mere predatory expedition, not extending beyond the limits of Judah, and probably, ere long, repelled by the invaded. Rehoboam's government acquired new life and vigour by the general revival of true religion, and his reign continued many years after the departure of Shishak. But—"he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord," *i. e.*, he did not adhere firmly to the good course of reformation he had begun, "and he did evil," for through the unhappy influence of his mother, a heathen foreigner, he had received in his youth a strong bias toward idolatry (see 1 Kings, 14. 21-24).

## CHAPTER XIII.

1-20. ABIJAH, SUCCEEDING, MAKES WAR AGAINST JEROBOAM, AND OVERCOMES HIM. 2. **His mother's name was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.**—The same as Maachah (see 1 Kings, 15. 2). She was "the daughter," *i. e.*, grand-daughter of Absalom (1 Kings, 15. 2; Cf. 2 Samuel, 14), mother of Abijah, and "mother," *i. e.*, grand-mother (1 Kings, 15. 10, *marg.*) of Asa. "Of Gibeah," probably implies that Uriel was connected with the house of Saul. **there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam**—The occasion of this war is not recorded (see 1 Kings, 15. 6, 7), but it may be inferred from the tenor of Abijah's address, that it arose from his youthful ambition to recover the full hereditary dominion of his ancestors. No prophet now forbade a war with Israel (ch. 11. 23), for Jeroboam had forfeited all claim to protection. 3. **Abijah set the battle in array**—*i. e.*, took the field and opened the campaign. **Abijah set the battle in array with four hundred thousand chosen men . . . Jeroboam with eight hundred thousand**—These are, doubtless, large numbers, considering the smallness of the two kingdoms. It must be borne in mind, however, that Oriental armies are mere mobs—vast numbers accompanying the camp in hope of plunder; so that the gross numbers described as going upon an Asiatic expedition are often far from denoting the exact number of fighting men. But in accounting for the large number



of soldiers enlisted in the respective armies of Abijah and Jeroboam, there is no need of resorting to this mode of explanation; for we know by the census of David the immense amount of the population that was capable of bearing arms (1 Chronicles, 21. 5; Cf. ch. 14. 8; 17. 14). 4-12. **Abijah stood up on Mount Zemaraim** — He had entered the enemy's territory, and was encamped on an eminence near Beth-el (Joshua, 18. 22). Jeroboam's army lay at the foot of the hill, and, as a pitched battle was expected, Abijah, according to the singular usage of ancient times, harangued the enemy. The speakers, in such circumstances, while always extolling their own merits, poured out torrents of invective and virulent abuse upon the adversary. So did Abijah. He dwelt on the Divine right of the house of David to the throne; and sinking all reference to the heaven-condemned offenses of Solomon and the Divine appointment of Jeroboam, as well as the Divine sanction of the separation, he upbraided Jeroboam as an usurper, and his subjects as rebels, who took advantage of the youth and inexperience of Rehoboam. Then contrasting the religious state of the two kingdoms, he drew a black picture of the impious innovations and gross idolatry introduced by Jeroboam, with his expulsion and impoverishment (ch. 11. 14) of the Levites; dwelt with reasonable pride on the pure and regular observance of the ancient institutions of Moses in his own dominions, and concluded with this emphatic appeal: "O, children of Israel! fight not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper." 13-17. **But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them** — The oration of Abijah, however animating an effect it might have produced on his own troops, was unheeded by the party to whom it was addressed; for while he was wasting time in useless words, Jeroboam had ordered a detachment of his men to move quietly round the base of the hill, so that when Abijah stopped speaking, he and his followers found themselves surprised in the rear, while the main body of the Israelitish forces remained in front. A panic might have ensued, had not the leaders "cried unto the Lord," and the priests "sounded with the trumpets" — the pledge of victory (Numbers, 10. 9; 31. 6); and, re-assured by the well-known signal, the men of Judah responded with a war shout which, echoed by the whole army, was followed by an impetuous rush against the foe. The shock was resistless. The ranks of the Israelites were broken, for "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel." They took to flight, and the merciless slaughter that ensued can be accounted for only by tracing it to the rancorous passions enkindled by a civil war. 19. **Abijah pursued after Jeroboam** — This sanguinary action widened the breach between the people of the two kingdoms. Abijah abandoned his original design of attempting the subjugation of the ten tribes, contenting himself with the recovery of a few border towns, which, though lying within Judah or Benjamin, had been alienated to the new or northern kingdom. Among these was Beth-el, which, with its sacred associations, he might be strongly desirous to wrest from profanation. 20. **Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah** — The disastrous action

at Zemaraim, which caused the loss of the entire flower and chivalry of his army, broke his spirits and crippled his power. **the Lord struck him, and he died**—*i. e.*, Jeroboam. He lived, indeed, two years after the death of Abijah (1 Kings, 14. 20, 15. 9). But he had been threatened with great calamities upon himself and his house, and it is apparently to the execution of these threatenings, which issued in his death, an anticipatory reference is here made.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**1-5. ASA DESTROYS IDOLATRY.** 1. **In his days the land was quiet ten years**—This long interval of peace was the continued effect of the great battle of Zemaraim (Cf. 1 Kings, 15. 11-14). 2. **Asa did that which was good and right**—(Cf. 1 Kings, 15. 14). Still his character and life were not free from faults (ch. 16. 7, 10, 12). 3. **brake down the images**—of Baal (see ch. 34. 4; Leviticus, 26. 30). **cut down the groves**—Rather, Asherim. 5. **he took away the high places**—*i. e.*, those devoted to idolatrous rites. **took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images**—All public objects and relics of idolatry in Jerusalem and other cities through his kingdom were destroyed; but those high places where God was worshipped under the figure of an ox, as at Beth-el, were suffered to remain (1 Kings, 15. 14); so far the reformation was incomplete.

**6-8. HAVING PEACE HE STRENGTHENS HIS KINGDOM WITH FORTS AND ARMIES.** 6. **he built fenced cities in Judah**—(see 1 Kings, 15. 22). 7. **while the land is yet before us**—*i. e.*, while we have free and undisputed progress everywhere; no foe is near; but, as this happy time of peace may not last always, and the kingdom is but small and weak, let us prepare suitable defenses in case of need. He had also an army of 580,000 men. Judah furnished the heavy armed soldiers, and Benjamin the archers. This large number does not mean a body of professional soldiers, such as compose European armies, but all, capable of bearing arms, and liable to be called into service.

**9-15. HE OVERCOMES ZERAH AND SPOILS THE ETHIOPIANS.** 9. **there came out against them Zerah, the Ethiopian**—This could not have been from Ethiopia, south of the cataracts of the Nile, for in the reign of Osorkon I, successor of Shishak, no foreign army would have been allowed a free passage through Egypt. Zerah must, therefore, have been chief of the Cushites or Ethiopians of Arabia, as they were evidently a nomad horde who had a settlement of tents and cattle in the neighbourhood of Gerar. **a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots**—“Twenty camels employed to carry couriers upon them might have procured that number of men to meet in a short time. As Zerah was the aggressor, he had time to choose when he would summon these men and attack the enemy. Every one of these Cushite shepherds, carrying with them their own provisions of flour and water, as is their invariable custom, might have fought with Asa without eating a loaf of Zera's bread or drinking a pint of his

water." [BRUCE'S TRAVELS.] 10. **Asa went out against him and they set the battle in array . . . at Mareshah** — One of the towns which Rehoboam fortified (ch. II. 8); near a great southern pass in the low country of Judah (Joshua, 15. 44). The engagement between the armies took place in a plain near that town called "the valley of Zephathah," supposed to be the Broadway coming down Beit Jibrin toward Tell-es-Safreh. [ROBINSON.] 11-13. **Asa cried unto the Lord his God** — Strong in the confidence that the power of God was able to give the victory equally with few as with many, the pious king marched with a comparatively small force to encounter the formidable host of marauders at his southern frontier. Committing his cause to God, he engaged in the conflict — completely routed the enemy and succeeded in obtaining, as the reward of his victory, a rich booty in treasure and cattle from the tents of this pastoral horde.

## CHAPTER XV.

1-15. **JUDAH MAKES A SOLEMN COVENANT WITH GOD.** 1. **Azariah, the son of Oded** — This prophet, who is mentioned nowhere else, appears at this stage of the sacred story in the discharge of an interesting mission. He went to meet Asa as he was returning from his victorious pursuit of the Ethiopians, and the congratulatory address here recorded was publicly made to the king in presence of his army. 2. **The Lord is with you, while ye be with him** — You have had, in your recent signal success, a remarkable proof that God's blessing is upon you; your victory has been the reward of your faith and piety. If you steadfastly adhere to the cause of God you may expect a continuance of His favour; but, if you abandon it, you will soon reap the bitter fruits of apostacy. 3-6. **Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, &c.** — Some think that Azariah was referring to the sad and disastrous condition to which superstition and idolatry had brought the neighbouring kingdom of Israel. His words should rather be taken in a wider sense, for it seems manifest that the prophet had his eye upon many periods in the national history, when the people were in the state described — a state of spiritual destitution and ignorance — and exhibited its natural result as widespread anarchy, mutual dissension among the tribes, and general suffering (Judges, 9. 23; 12. 4; 20. 21; 2 Chronicles, 13. 17). These calamities God permitted to befall them as the punishment of their apostacy. Azariah's object in these remarks was to establish the truth of his counsel (*v.* 2), and threatening, in case of neglecting it, by describing the uniform course of the Divine procedure toward Israel, as shown in all periods of their history; and then, after this appeal to national experience, he concluded with an earnest exhortation to the king to prosecute the work of reformation so well begun. 7. **Be ye strong** — Great resolution and indomitable energy would be required to preserve in the face of the opposition your reforming measures will encounter. **your work shall be rewarded** — *i. e.,*

what you do in the cause and for the glory of God will assuredly be followed by the happiest results both to yourself and your subjects. 8. **when Asa heard . . . the prophecy of Oded the prophet** — The insertion of these words, “of Oded the prophet,” is generally regarded as a corruption of the text. “The sole remedy is to erase them. They are, probably, the remains of a note, which crept in from the margin into the text.” [BERTHEAU.] **he took courage** — Animated by the seasonable and pious address of Azariah, Asa became a more zealous reformer than ever, employing all his royal authority and influence to extirpate every vestige of idolatry from the land. **and out of the cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim** — He may have acquired cities of Ephraim, the conquest of which is not recorded (ch. 17. 2); but it has been commonly supposed that the reference is to cities which his father Abijah had taken in that quarter (ch. 13. 19). **renewed the altar of the Lord . . . before the porch** — *i. e.*, the altar of burnt-offering. As this was done on or about the fifteenth year of the reign of this pious king, the renewal must have consisted in some splendid repairs or embellishments, which made it look like a new dedication; or in a reconstruction of a temporary altar, like that of Solomon (ch. 7. 7), for extraordinary sacrifices to be offered on an approaching occasion. 9-15. **he gathered all Judah and Benjamin** — Not satisfied with these minor measures of purification and improvement, Asa meditated a grand scheme which was, to pledge his whole kingdom to complete the work of reformation, and with this view waited for a general assembly of the people. **and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh** — The population of Asa’s kingdom had been vastly increased by the continued influx of strangers, who, prompted by motives either of interest or of piety, sought in his dominions that security and freedom which they could not enjoy amid the complicated troubles which distracted Israel. **and out of Simeon** — Although a portion of that tribe, located within the territory of Judah, were already subjects of the southern kingdom, the general body of the Simeonites had joined in forming the northern kingdom of Israel. But many of them now returned of their own accord. 10. **the third month** — When was held the feast of Pentecost, which, on this occasion, was celebrated at Jerusalem by an extraordinary sacrifice of 700 oxen and 7,000 sheep, the spoil of the Ethiopians being offered; and the assembled worshippers entered with great and holy enthusiasm into a national covenant “to seek the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul;” and, at the same time, to execute with rigour the laws which made idolatry punishable with death (Deuteronomy, 17. 2-5; Hebrews, 10. 28). The people testified unbounded satisfaction with this important religious movement, and its moral influence was seen in the promotion of piety, order and tranquillity throughout the land. 18. **the things which his father had dedicated** — Probably part of the booty obtained by his signal victory over Jeroboam, but which, though dedicated, had hitherto been unrepresented. **and that he himself had dedicated** — Of the booty taken from the Ethiopians. Both

of these were now deposited in the temple as votive offerings to Him whose right hand and holy arm had given them the victory.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**1-14. ASA, BY A LEAGUE WITH THE SYRIANS, DIVERTS BAASHA FROM BUILDING RAMAH.** 1-6. **In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha came up**—Baasha had died several years before this date (1 Kings, 15. 33), and the best Biblical critics are agreed in considering this date to be calculated from the separation of the kingdoms, and coincident with the sixteenth year of Asa's reign. This mode of reckoning was, in all likelihood, generally followed in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel, the public annals of the time (*v.* 11), the source from which the inspired historian drew his account. **Baasha . . . built Ramah**—*i. e.*, fortified it. The blessing of God which manifestly rested at this time on the kingdom of Judah, the signal victory of Asa, the freedom and purity of religious worship, and the fame of the late national covenant, were regarded with great interest throughout Israel, and attracted a constantly increasing number of emigrants to Judah. Baasha, alarmed at this movement, determined to stem the tide; and as the high road to and from Jerusalem passed by Ramah, he made that frontier town, about six miles north from Asa's capital, a military station, where the vigilance of his sentinels would effectually prevent all passage across the boundary of the kingdom (see 1 Kings, 15. 16-22; also, Jeremiah, 41. 9). **4. Benhadad . . . sent the captains of his armies . . . and they smote . . . Abel-maim**—“The meadow of waters,” supposed to have been situated on the marshy plain near the uppermost lake of the Jordan. The other two towns were also in the northern district of Palestine. These unexpected hostilities of his Syrian ally interrupted Baasha's fortifications at Ramah, and his death, happening soon after, prevented his resuming them. **7-10. Hanani the seer came to Asa . . . and said**—His object was to show the king his error in forming his recent league with Benhadad. The prophet represented the appropriation of the temple treasures to purchase the services of the Syrian mercenaries, as indicating a distrust in God most blamable with the king's experience, and he added, that in consequence of his want of faith, Asa had lost the opportunity of gaining a victory over the united forces of Baasha and Benhadad, more splendid than that obtained over the Ethiopians—a victory which, by destroying their armies, would have deprived them of all power to molest him in future; whereas by his foolish and worldly policy, so unworthy of God's vicegerent, to misapply the temple treasures and corrupt the fidelity of an ally of the king of Israel, he had tempted the cupidity of the one and increased the hostility of the other, and rendered himself liable to renewed troubles (1 Kings, 15. 32). This rebuke was pungent and, from its truth and justness, ought to have penetrated and afflicted the heart of such a man as Asa. But his pride was offended at the freedom taken by the honest reprover of royalty, and, in a burst

of passionate resentment, he ordered Hanani to be thrown into prison. 10. **Asa oppressed some of the people the same time**—What was the form or degree of this oppression is not recorded. The cause of his oppressing them was, probably, the same offense as Hanani—for a strong expression of their dissatisfaction with his conduct in leaguings with Benhadad, or it may be his maltreatment of the Lord's servant. 12. **Asa was . . . diseased in his feet**—Probably the gout. **his disease was exceeding great**—Better, "moved upward" in his body, which proves the violent and dangerous type of the malady. **yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians**—Most probably Egyptian physicians, who were anciently in high repute at foreign courts, and who pretended to expel diseases by charms, incantations and mystic arts. Asa's fault consisted in his trusting to such physicians, while he neglected to supplicate the aid and blessing of God. The best and holiest men have been betrayed for a time into sins, but through repentance have risen again, and as Asa is pronounced a good man (ch. 15. 17) it may be presumed that he also was restored to a better state of mind. 14. **they buried him in his own sepulcher**—The tombs in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem were excavated in the side of a rock. One cave contained several tombs or sepulchers. **laid him in the bed . . . filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices**—It is evident that a sumptuous public funeral was given him as a tribute of respect and gratitude for his pious character and patriotic government. But whether "the bed" means a state couch on which he lay exposed to public view, the odoriferous perfumes being designed to neutralize the offensive smell of the corpse, or whether it refers to an embalmment, in which aromatic spices were always used in great profusion, it is impossible to say. **they made a very great burning for him**—According to some, for consuming the spices; but according to others, it was a magnificent pile for the cremation of the corpse—a usage which was at that time, and long after, prevalent among the Hebrews, and the omission of which, in the case of royal personages, was reckoned a great indignity (ch. 21. 19; 1 Samuel, 31. 12; Jeremiah, 34. 5; Amos, 6. 10).

## CHAPTER XVII.

1-6. **JEHOSHAPHAT REIGNS WELL, AND PROSPERS.** 1. **Jehoshaphat strengthened himself against Israel**—the temper and proceedings of the kings of Israel rendered it necessary for him to prepare vigorous measures of defense on the northern frontier of his kingdom, and these consisted in filling all the fortresses with their full complement of troops, and establishing military stations in various parts of the country, as well as in the cities of Mount Ephraim, which belonged to Jehoshaphat (ch. 15. 8). 3-5. **he walked in the first ways of his father David**—He imitated the piety of his great ancestor in the early part of his reign, before he made those unhappy lapses which dishonoured his character. **and sought not unto Baalim**—a term used for idols generally in

contradistinction to the Lord God of his father. **and not after the doings of Israel**—he observed with scrupulous fidelity, and employed his royal influence to support the Divine institutions as enacted by Moses, abhorring that spurious and unlawful calf-worship that formed now the established religion in Israel. Being thus far removed, alike from gross idolatry and Israelitish apostasy, and adhering zealously to the requirements of the Divine law, the blessing of God rested on his government; for, ruling in the fear of God, and for the good of his subjects, “the Lord established the kingdom in his hand.” **all Judah brought . . . presents**—This was customary with the people generally at the beginning of a reign (1 Samuel, 10. 27), and with the nobles and high functionaries yearly afterward. They were given in the form of voluntary offerings, to avoid the odious idea of a tax or tribute. 6. **his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord**—full of faith and piety, he possessed zeal and courage to undertake the reformation of manners, to suppress all the works and objects of idolatry (see ch. 20. 33), and held out public encouragement to the pure worship of God.

7-11. HE SENDS LEVITES TO TEACH IN JUDAH. 7-11. **Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes to teach in the cities of Judah**—The ordinary work of teaching devolved on the priests; but extraordinary commissioners were appointed, probably, to ascertain whether the work had been done or neglected. This deputation of five princes, assisted by two priests and nine Levites, were to make a circuit of the towns in Judah; and it is the first practical measure we read of as being adopted by any of the kings for the religious instruction of the people. Time and unbroken opportunities were afforded for carrying fully out this excellent plan of home education, for the kingdom enjoyed internal tranquillity as well as freedom from foreign wars. It is conformable to the pious style of the sacred historian to trace this profound peace to the “fear of the Lord having fallen on all kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah.” **the book of the law**—*i. e.*, either the whole Pentateuch, or only the book of Deuteronomy, which contains an abridgment of it. 11. **Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and tribute silver**—Either they had been his tributaries, or they were desirous of securing his valuable friendship, and now made a voluntary offer of tribute. Perhaps they were the Philistines who had submitted to the yoke of David (2 Samuel, 8. 1; Psalm, 60. 8). **the Arabians**—The nomad tribes on the south of the Dead Sea, who, seeking the protection of Jehoshaphat, after his conquest of Edom, paid their tribute in the way most suitable to their pastoral habits—the tale of so many heads of cattle.

12-19. HIS GREATNESS, CAPTAINS AND ARMIES. 14. **These are the numbers**—The warriors were arranged in the army according to their father’s houses. The army of Jehoshaphat, commanded by five great generals, and consisting of five unequal divisions, comprised eleven hundred and sixty thousand men, without including those who garrisoned the fortresses. No monarch, since the time of Solomon, equaled Jehoshaphat in the extent of his

revenue, in the strength of his fortifications, and the number of his troops.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**1-34. JEHOSEPHAT AND AHAB GO AGAINST RAMOTH-GILEAD.** 2. **after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria** — This is word for word, the same as 1 Kings, 22. (See commentary on that chapter.)

## CHAPTER XIX.

**1-4. JEHOSEPHAT VISITS HIS KINGDOM. 1. Jehoshaphat returned to his house in peace** — (see ch. 18. 16). Not long after he had resumed the ordinary functions of royalty in Jerusalem, he was one day disturbed by an unexpected and ominous visit from a prophet of the Lord. This was Jehu, of whose father a notice had occurred (ch. 16. 7). He himself had been called to discharge the prophetic office in Israel; but, probably for his bold rebuke to Baasha (1 Kings, 16. 1), had been driven by that arbitrary monarch within the territory of Judah, where we now find him with the privileged license of his order, taking the same religious supervision of Jehoshaphat's proceedings, as he had formerly done of Baasha's. At the interview here described, he condemned, in the strongest terms, the king of Judah's imprudent and incongruous league with Ahab — God's open enemy (1 Kings, 22. 2) — as an unholy alliance that would be conducive neither to the honour and comfort of his house nor to the best interests of his kingdom; and he apprised Jehoshaphat that, on account of that grave offense, "wrath was upon him from before the Lord;" a judgment that was inflicted soon after (see ch. 20). The prophet's rebuke, however, was administered in a mingled strain of severity and mildness; for he interposed "a nevertheless" (v. 3) which implied that the threatened storm would be averted, in token of the Divine approval of his public efforts for the promotion of the true religion, as well as of the sincere piety of his personal character and life. 4. **he went out again through the people** — This means his re-appointing the commissioners of public instruction (ch. 17. 7-9), perhaps with new powers and a larger staff of assistants to overtake every part of the land. The complement of teachers required for that purpose would be easily obtained from the whole tribe of Levites being now concentrated within the kingdom of Judah.

**5-7. HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JUDGES. 5-7. he set judges in the land** — There had been judicial courts established at an early period. But Jehoshaphat was the first king who modified these institutions according to the circumstances of the now fragmentary kingdom of Judah. He fixed local courts in each of the fortified cities, these being the provincial capitals of every district (see Deuteronomy, 16. 18-20).

**8-11. TO THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES. 8. Set of the Levites ... priests and chief of the fathers of Israel** — A certain number of



these three classes constituted a supreme court, which sat in Jerusalem to review appellate cases from the inferior courts. It consisted of two divisions: the first of which had jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters; the second, in civil, fiscal and criminal cases. According to others, the two divisions of the supreme court adjudicated the one according to the law contained in the sacred books, the other to the law of custom and equity, as in Eastern countries at the present day the written and unwritten law are objects of separate jurisdiction.

## CHAPTER XX.

**1-21. JEHOSEPHAT, INVADÉD BY THE MOABITES, PROCLAIMS A FAST.** 1. **The children of Moab . . . Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites**—Supposed to be rather the name of a certain people called Mohammonim or Mehunim (ch. 26. 7), who dwelt in Mount Seir—either a branch of the old Edomite race, or a separate tribe who were settled there. 2. **From beyond sea, on this side Syria**—Instead of Syria, some versions read “Edom,” and many able critics prefer this reading, both because the nomad tribes here mentioned were far from Syria, and because express mention is made of Mount Seir, *i. e.*, Edom. The meaning then is, that this confederate horde was composed of the different tribes that inhabited the far distant regions bordering on the northern and eastern coast of the Red Sea. Their progress was apparently by the southern point of the Dead Sea, as far as En-ge<sup>di</sup>, which, more anciently, was called Hazezon-tamar (Genesis, 14. 7). This is the uniform route taken by the Arabs in their marauding expeditions at the present day; and, in coming round the southern end of the Dead Sea, they can penetrate along the low-lying Ghor far north, without letting their movements be known to the tribes and villages west of the mountain-chain. [ROBINSON.] Thus, anciently, the invading horde in Jehoshaphat’s time had marched as far north as En-ge<sup>di</sup>, before intelligence of their advance was conveyed to the court. En-ge<sup>di</sup> is recognized in the modern Ain-jidy, and is situated at a point of the western shore, nearly equidistant from both extremities of the lake. [ROBINSON.] 3-4. **Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah**—Alarmed by the intelligence, and conscious of his total inability to repel this host of invaders, Jehoshaphat felt his only refuge was at the horns of the altar. He resolved to implore the aid of his God, and, in conformity with his resolution, summoned his whole subjects to observe a solemn fast at the sanctuary. It was customary with the Hebrew kings to proclaim fasts in perilous circumstances, either in a city, a district, or throughout the entire kingdom, according to the greatness of the emergency. On this occasion, it was a universal fast, which extended to infants (*v.* 13; see, also, Joel, 2. 15, 16; Jonah, 3. 7). 5-13. **Jehoshaphat stood in the house of the Lord, before the new court**—*i. e.*, the great or outer court (ch. 4. 9), called the new court, probably, from having been at that time enlarged or beautified. 6. **and said,**

**O Lord God of our fathers**—This earnest and impressive prayer embraces every topic and argument which, as king and representative of the chosen people, he could urge; and then concludes with an earnest appeal to the justice of God to protect those who, without provocation, were attacked, and who were unable to defend themselves against overwhelming numbers. 14-18. **Then upon Jahaziel . . . came the spirit of the Lord**—This prophet is not elsewhere mentioned, but his claim to the inspiration of a prophetic spirit was verified by the calm and distinct announcement he gave, both of the manner and the completeness of the deliverance he predicted. 16. **they come up by the cliff of Ziz**—This seems to have been nothing else than the present pass which leads northward, by an ascent from En-ge-di to Jerusalem, issuing a little below Tekoa. The wilderness of Jeruel was, probably, the large, flat district adjoining the desert of Tekoa, called Et-Husasah, from a wady on its northern side. [ROBINSON.] 18. **Jehoshaphat bowed his head . . . and all Judah, &c.**—This attitude was expressive of reverence to God and His Word, of confidence in His promise, and thankfulness for so extraordinary a favour. 19. **the Levites stood up to praise the Lord**—Doubtless by the king's command; and their anthem was sung with such a joyful acclaim as showed that they universally regarded the victory as already obtained. 20, 21. **as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood . . . Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem**—Probably in the gate of Jerusalem, the place of general rendezvous; and as the people were on the eve of setting out, he exhorted them to repose implicit trust in the Lord and His prophet, not to be timid or desponding at sight of the enemy, but to remain firm in the confident assurance of a miraculous deliverance, without their striking a single stroke. **he appointed singers . . . that they should praise . . . as they went before the army**—Having arranged the line of procession, he gave the signal to move forward; when the Levites, leading the van with their musical instruments, and singing the 136th Psalm, the people went on, not as an army marching against an enemy, but returning in joyful triumph after a victory. 22-30. **THE OVERTHROW OF HIS ENEMIES.** 22. **when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir**—Some think that this was done by angels in human form, whose sudden appearance diffused an uncontrollable panic; others entertain the more probable opinion that, in the camp of this vast horde, composed of different tribes, jealousies and animosities had sprung up, which led to widespread dissensions and fierce feuds, in which they drew the sword against each other. The consequence was, that as the mutual strife commenced when the Hebrew procession set out from Jerusalem, the work of destruction was completed before Jehoshaphat and his people arrived at the battle field. Thus easy it is for God to make the wrath of man to praise Him, to confound the counsels of His enemies, and employ their own passions in defeating the machinations they have devised for the overthrow of His Church and people. 24. **when Judah came to the watch tower in the wilderness**—Most probably the conical hill, Jebel

Fereidis, or Frank Mountain, from the summit of which they obtained the first view of the scene of slaughter. Jehoshaphat and his people found the field strewed with dead bodies, so that they had not to fight at all, but to take possession of an immense booty, the collection of which occupied three days. On the fourth they set out on their return to Jerusalem in the same order and joyful mood as they came. The place where they mustered previous to departure was, from their public thanksgiving service, called "The Valley of Berachah" (benediction), now Wady Bereikut.

**31-37. HIS REIGN.** 31. **Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah**—(see ch. 24. 1). 32. **he walked in the way of Asa, his father, and departed not from it**—He was more steadfast and consistently religious (Cf. ch. 15. 18). 33. **the high places were not taken away**—Those on which idolatry was practiced were entirely destroyed (ch. 17. 6), but those where the people, notwithstanding the erection of the temple, continued to worship the true God, prudence required to be slowly and gradually abolished, in deference to popular prejudice. 35-37. **after this did Jehoshaphat . . . join himself with Ahaziah . . . to make ships**—A combined fleet was built at Ezion-geber, the destination of which was to voyage to Tartessus, but it was wrecked. Jehoshaphat's motives for entering into this partnership was to secure a free passage through Israel, for the vessels were to be conveyed across the Isthmus of Suez, and to sail to the west of Europe from one of the ports of Palestine on the Mediterranean. Eliezer, a prophet, denounced this unholy alliance, and foretold, as a Divine judgment, the total wreck of the whole fleet. The consequence was, that although Jehoshaphat broke off—in obedience to the Divine will—his league with Ahaziah, he formed a new scheme of a merchant fleet, and Ahaziah wished to be admitted a partner. The proposal of the Israelitish king was respectfully declined. The destination of this new fleet was to Ophir, because the Israelitish seaports were not accessible to him for the Tartessus trade; but the ships, when just off the docks, were wrecked in the rocky creek of Ezion-geber.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**1-4. JEHORAM SUCCEEDS JEHOSHAPHAT.** 1. **Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers . . . Jehoram reigned**—The late king left seven sons, two of them are in our version named Azariah; but in the Hebrew they appear considerably different, the one being spelt Azariah and the other Azariahu. Though Jehoshaphat had made his family arrangements with prudent precaution and while he divided the functions of royalty in his life-time (Cf. 2 Kings, 8. 16), as well as fixed the succession to the throne in his eldest son, he appointed each of the others to the government of a fenced city; thus providing them with an honourable independence. But his good intentions were frustrated. For no sooner did Jehoram find himself in the sole possession of sovereign power than from jealousy, or on account of their connections, he murdered all his

brothers, together with some leading influential persons who, he suspected, were attached to their interest or would avenge their deaths. Similar tragedies have been sadly frequent in Eastern courts, where the heir of the crown looks upon his brothers as his most formidable enemies and is, therefore, tempted to secure his power by their death.

**5-7. HIS WICKED REIGN.** 6. **he walked . . . as did the house of Ahab, for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife**—The precepts and examples of his excellent father were soon obliterated by his matrimonial alliance with a daughter of the royal house of Israel. Through the influence of Athaliah he abolished the worship of the Lord and encouraged an introduction of all the corruptions prevalent in the sister kingdom. The Divine vengeance was denounced against him and would have utterly destroyed him and his house had it not been for a tender regard to the promise made to David (2 Samuel, 7 ; 2 Kings, 8. 19).

**8-17. EDMO AND LIBNAH REVOLT.** 8. **The Edomites revolted**—That nation had been made dependent by David, and down to the time of Jehoshaphat was governed by a tributary ruler (1 Kings, 22. 47; 2 Kings, 3. 9). But that king having been slain in an insurrection at home, his successor thought to ingratiate himself with his new subjects by raising the flag of independence. [JOSEPHUS.] The attempt was defeated in the first instance by Jehoram, who possessed all the military establishments of his father ; but, being renewed unexpectedly, the Edomites succeeded in completely emancipating their country from the yoke of Judah (Genesis, 27. 40). Libnah, which lay on the southern frontier and toward Edom, followed the example of that country. **12-15. there came a writing to him from Elijah**—That prophet's translation having taken place in the reign of Jehoshaphat, we must conclude that the name of Elijah has, by the error of a transcriber, been put for that of Elisha. **13. hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab**—*i. e.*, introduced the superstitions and vices of Phœnician idolatry (see Deuteronomy, 13. 6-14). On this account, as well as for his unnatural cruelties, Divine vengeance was denounced against him, which was soon after executed exactly as the prophet had foretold. A series of overwhelming calamities befel this wicked king, for, in addition to the revolts already mentioned, two neighbouring tribes (see ch. 17. 11) made hostile incursions on the southern and western portions of his kingdom ; his country was ravaged, his capitol taken, his palace plundered, his wives carried off, all his children slain except the youngest, himself was seized with an incurable dysentery, which, after subjecting him to the most painful suffering for the unusual period of two years, carried him off, a monument of the Divine judgment ; and, to complete his degradation, his death was unlamented—his burial unhonoured by his subjects. This usage, similar to what obtained in Egypt, seems to have crept in among the Hebrews of giving funeral honours to their kings, or withholding them, according to the good or bad characters of their reign.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**1-4. AHAZIAH, SUCCEEDING, REIGNS WICKEDLY. 1. The inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah . . . king** — Or Jehoahaz (ch. 21. 17). All his elder brothers having been slaughtered by the Arab marauders, the throne of Judah rightfully belonged to him as the only legitimate heir of Joram. **2. Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign** — (Cf. 2 Kings, 8. 26). According to that passage, the commencement of his reign is dated in the twenty-second year of his age, and, according to this, in the forty-second year of the kingdom of his mother's family. [LIGHT-FOOT.] "If Ahaziah ascended the throne in the twenty-second year of his life, he must have been born in his father's nineteenth year. Hence it may seem strange that he had elder brothers; but in the East they marry early, and royal princes had, besides the wife of the first rank, usually concubines, as Jehoram had (ch. 21. 17); he might, therefore, in the nineteenth year of his age, very well have several sons" [KEIL] (Cf. ch. 21. 20; 2 Kings, 8. 17). **Athaliah, the daughter of Omri** — More properly, grand-daughter. The expression is used loosely, as the statement was made simply for the purpose of intimating that she belonged to that idolatrous race. **3, 4. His mother was his counselor . . . they were his counselors** — The facile king surrendered himself wholly to the influence of his mother and her relatives. Athaliah and her son introduced a universal corruption of morals, and made idolatry the religion of the court and the nation. By them he was induced not only to conform to the religion of the northern kingdom, but to join a new expedition against Ramoth-gilead (see 2 Kings, 9. 10). **5. Went . . . to war against Hazael king of Syria** — It may be mentioned as a very minute and therefore important confirmation of this part of the sacred history, that the names of Jehu and Hazael his contemporary have both been found on Assyrian sculptures — and there is also a notice of Ithbaal, king of Sidon, who was the father of Jezebel. **6. Azariah went down** — *i. e.*, from Ramoth-gilead, to visit the king of Israel who was lying ill of his wounds at Jezreel, and fled there on the alarm of Jehu's rebellion. **9. He sought Ahaziah and caught him (for he was hid in Samaria)** — (Cf. 2 Kings, 9. 27-29). The two accounts are easily reconciled. "Ahaziah fled first to the garden-house and escaped to Samaria; but was here, where he had hid himself, taken by Jehu's men who pursued him, brought to Jehu, who was still near or in Jezree<sup>l</sup>, and at his command slain at the hill Gur, beside Ibleam, in his chariot, that is, mortally wounded with an arrow, so that he, again fleeing, expired at Megiddo." [KEIL.] Jehu left the corpse at the disposal of the king of Judah's attendants, who conveyed it to Jerusalem, and, out of respect to his grand-father Jehoshaphat's memory, gave him an honourable interment in the tombs of the kings. **So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom** — His children were too young to assume the reins of government, and all the other royal princes had been massacred by Jehu (*v.* 8).

**10-12. ATHALIAH DESTROYING THE SEED ROYAL, SAVE JOASH, USURPS THE KINGDOM.** 10. **Athaliah . . . arose and destroyed all the seed royal**—(see 2 Kings, II. 1-3). Maddened by the massacre of the royal family of Ahab, she resolved that the royal house of David should have the same fate. Knowing the commission which Jehu had received to extirpate the whole of Ahab's posterity, she expected that he would extend his sword to her. Anticipating his movements she resolved, as her only defense and security, to usurp the throne and destroy "the seed royal," both because they were hostile to the Phœnician worship of Baal, which she was determined to uphold, and because, if one of the young princes became king, his mother would supersede Athaliah in the dignity of queen-mother. 12. **he was with them hid in the house of God**—Certain persons connected with the priesthood had a right to occupy the buildings in the outer wall and all within the outer wall was often called the temple. Jehoiada and his family resided in one of these apartments.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**1-11. JEHOIADA MAKES JOASH KING.** 1. **in the seventh year Jehoiada . . . took the captains of hundreds, &c**—(see 2 Kings, II. 4, 17). The five officers mentioned here had been probably of the royal guard and were known to be strongly disaffected to the government of Athaliah. 2. **chief of the fathers of Israel**—This name is frequently used in Chronicles for Judah and Benjamin, now all that remained of Israel. Having cautiously intrusted the secret of the young prince's preservation to all the leading men in the kingdom, he enlisted their interest in the royal cause and got their pledge to support it by a secret oath of fidelity. **they came to Jerusalem**—The time chosen for the grand discovery was, probably, one of the annual festivals when there was a general concourse of the nation at the capital. 4. **This is the thing that ye shall do**—The arrangements made for defense are here described. The people were divided into three bodies; one attended as guards to the king, while the other two were posted at all the doors and gates and the captains and military officers who entered the temple unarmed to lull suspicion were furnished with weapons out of the sacred armoury where David had deposited his trophies of victory and which was re-opened on this occasion. 8. **Jehoiada . . . dismissed not the courses**—As it was necessary to have as large a disposable force as he could command on such a crisis, the high priest detained those who, in other circumstances, would have returned home on the expiry of their week of service. 11. **then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown and gave to him the testimony**—Some think that the original word rendered "testimony," as its derivation warrants, may signify here the regalia, especially the bracelet (2 Samuel, I. 10); and this view they support, on the ground that "gave him" being supplemented, the text properly runs thus: "Put upon him the crown

and testimony." At the same time, it seems equally pertinent to take "the testimony," in the usual acceptation of that term; and, accordingly, many are of opinion that a roll containing a copy of the law (Deuteronomy, 17. 18) was placed in the king's hands, which he held as a sceptre or truncheon; while others, referring to the custom of Oriental people, when receiving a letter or document from a highly respected quarter, lifting it up to their heads before opening it, consider that Joash besides the crown had the book of the law laid upon his head (see Job, 31. 35, 36).

**God save the king** — *lit.*, long live the king.

**12-15. ATHALIAH SLAIN.** 12. **when Athaliah heard the noise of the people** — The unusual commotion indicated by the blast of the trumpets, and the vehement acclamations of the people, drew her attention or excited her fears. She might have flattered herself that, having slain all the royal family, she was in perfect security; but it is just as likely that, finding on reflection, one had escaped her murderous hands, she might not deem it expedient to institute any inquiries; but the very idea would keep her constantly in a state of jealous suspicion and irritation. In that state of mind, the wicked usurper, hearing across the Tyropæon the outburst of popular joy, rushed across the bridge to the temple grounds, and, penetrating from a single glance the meaning of the whole scene, raised a shriek of "Treason!" 13. **behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in** — The king's pillar was in the people's court, opposite that of the priests'. The young king, arrayed in the royal insignia, had been brought out of the inner, to stand forth in the outer, court, to the public view. Some think that he stood on the brazen scaffold of Solomon, erected beside the pillar. 14, 15. **Slay her not in the house of the Lord . . . and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate by the king's house, they slew her there** — The high priest ordered her immediately to be taken out of the temple grounds and put to death; and they lay hands on her, and she went by the way by the which horses came into the king's house, and there she was slain" (2 Kings, 11. 16).

"Now, we are not to suppose that horses came into" the king's house "of residence, but into the king's (horses') house or hippodrome (the gate of the king's mules) [JOSEPHUS], he had built for them on the south-east of the temple, in the immediate vicinity of the horse gate in the valley of Kedron — a valley which was at that time a kind of desecrated place by the destruction of idols and their appurtenances" (2 Kings, 28. 2, 6, 12). [BARCLAY'S CITY OF THE GREAT KING.]

16. **JEHOIADA RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF GOD, AND SETTLES THE KING.** 16. **Jehoiada made a covenant** — (see 2 Kings, 11. 17).

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**1-14. JOASH REIGNS WELL ALL THE DAYS OF JEHOIADA.** 1-3. **Joash began to reign** — (see 2 Kings, 12. 1-3). **Jehoiada took for him two wives** — As Jehoiada was now too old to contract such new alliances, the generality of interpreters apply this statement

to the young king. 4-14. **Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord** — (see 2 Kings, 12. 4-16)

**15, 16. JEHOIADA BEING DEAD 15 16. Jehoiada waxed old . . . and died** — His life protracted to unusual longevity, and spent in the service of his country, deserved some tribute of public gratitude, and this was rendered in the posthumous honours that were bestowed on him. Among the Hebrews, intramural interment was prohibited in every city but Jerusalem, and there the exception was made only to the royal family and persons of eminent merit, on whom the distinction was conferred of being buried in the city of David, among the kings, as in the case of Jehoiada.

**17-22. JOASH FALLS TO IDOLATRY. 17-22. Now up came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king** — Hitherto, while Joash occupied the throne, his uncle had held the reins of sovereign power, and by his excellent counsels had directed the young king to such measures as were calculated to promote both the civil and religious interests of the country. The fervent piety, practical wisdom, and inflexible firmness of that sage counselor, exerted immense influence over all classes. But now that the helm of the state-ship was no longer steered by the sound head and firm hand of the venerable high priest, the real merits of Joash's administration appear; and for want of good and enlightened principle, as well as, perhaps, of natural energy of character, he allowed himself to be borne onward in a course which soon wrecked the vessel upon hidden rocks. **the king hearkened unto them, &c.** — They were secretly attached to idolatry, and their elevated rank affords sad proof how extensively and deeply the nation had become corrupted during the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah. With strong professions of allegiance they humbly requested that they might not be subjected to the continued necessity of frequent and expensive journeys to Jerusalem, but allowed the privilege their fathers had enjoyed of worshipping God in high places at home; and they framed their petition in this plausible and least offensive manner, well knowing that, if excused attendance at the temple, they might — without risk of discovery or disturbance — indulge their tastes in the observance of any private rites they pleased. The weak-minded king granted their petition and the consequence was, that when they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, they soon "served groves and idols." **wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem** — The particular mention of Jerusalem as involved in the sin, implies that the neglect of the temple and the consequent idolatry received not only the king's toleration, but his sanction; and it naturally occurs to ask how, at his mature age such a total abandonment of a place, with which all his early recollections were associated, can be accounted for. It has been suggested that what he had witnessed of the conduct of many of the priests in the careless performance of the worship, and especially their unwillingness to collect the money, as well as apply a portion of their revenues for the repairs of the temple, had alienated and disgusted him. [LECLERC.] **19. Yet he sent prophets** — Elisha, Micah, Jehu son of Hanani, Jahziel son of Zechariah (ch. 20. 14),



Eliezer son of Dodavah (ch. 20. 37), lived and taught at that time. But all their prophetic warnings and denunciations were unheard and unheeded. 20. **the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada**—probably a younger son, for his name does not occur in the list of Aaron's successors (1 Chronicles, 6). **stood above the people**—Being of the priestly order he spoke from the inner court, which was considerably higher than that of the people. **and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper, &c.**—His near relationship to the king might have created a feeling of delicacy and reluctance to interfere; but at length he, too, was prompted by an irresistible impulse to protest against the prevailing impiety. The bold freedom and energy of his remonstrance, as well as his denunciation of the national calamities that would certainly follow, were most unpalatable to the king, while they so roused the fierce passions of the multitude, that a band of miscreants, at the secret instigation of Joash, stoned him to death. This deed of violence involved complicated criminality on the part of the king. It was a horrid outrage on a prophet of the Lord—base ingratitude to a family who had preserved his life—atrocious treatment of a true Hebrew patriot—an illegal and unrighteous exercise of his power and authority as a king. 22. **when he died, he said, The Lord look upon it and require it**—These dying words, if they implied a vindictive imprecation, exhibit a striking contrast to the spirit of the first Christian martyr (Acts, 7. 60). But, instead of being the expression of a personal wish, they might be the utterance of a prophetic doom.

23-27. **HE IS SLAIN BY HIS SERVANTS.** 23. **at the end of the year the host of Syria came up.** This invasion took place under the personal conduct of Hazael, whom Joash, to save the miseries of a siege, prevailed on to withdraw his forces by a large present of gold (2 Kings, 12. 18). Most probably, also, he promised the payment of an annual tribute, on the neglect or refusal of which, the Syrians returned the following year; and, with a mere handful of men, inflicted a total and humiliating defeat on the collected force of the Hebrews. 25. **they left him in sore diseases**—The close of his life was embittered by a painful malady, which long confined him to bed. **his own servants conspired against him**—These two conspirators (whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens) were probably courtiers, who, having constant access to the bed-chamber, could the more easily execute their design. **for the blood of the sons**—read “the son” of Jehoiada. Public opinion seems to have ascribed the disasters of his life and reign to that foul crime, and as the king had long lost the esteem and respect of his subjects, neither horror nor sorrow was expressed for his miserable end.

## CHAPTER XXV.

**1-4. AMAZIAH BEGINS TO REIGN WELL. I. Amaziah was twenty and five years old, &c.**—(see 2 Kings, 4. 1-6).

**5-10. HAVING HIRED AN ARMY OF ISRAELITES AGAINST THE EDMOMITES, AT THE WORD OF A PROPHET, HE LOSES AN HUNDRED TALENTS, AND DISMISSES THEM. 5. Amaziah made captains, &c.**

—As all who were capable of bearing arms were liable to serve, it was quite natural in making up the muster-roll to class them according to their respective families, and to appoint the officers of each corps from the same quarter, so that all the soldiers who formed a regiment were brothers, relatives, friends. Thus the Hebrew troops were closely linked together, and had strong inducements to keep steady in their ranks. **found them three hundred thousand choice men**—This was only a fourth part of Jehoshaphat's army (ch. 17. 14-19), showing how sadly the kingdom of Judah had, in the space of eighty-two years, been reduced in population by foreign wars, no less than by internal corruptions. But the full amount of Amaziah's troops may not be here stated.

**6. He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour for an hundred talents of silver**—This sum was paid into the exchequer of Jehoahaz—not given as bounty to the mercenaries who were obliged to serve at the sovereign's call, their remuneration consisting only in the booty they might obtain. It was about £50,000 sterling, being 10s. per man, including officers—a very paltry pay, compared with the bounty given for a soldier in this country. But it must be remembered that, in ancient times, campaigns were short, and the hazards of the service comparatively small. **7, 8.**

**there came a man of God**—sent to dissuade Amaziah from the course he was following, on the ground that “the Lord was not with Israel.” This statement was perfectly intelligible to the king. But the historian, writing long after, thought it might require explanation, and therefore added the comment, “with all the children of Ephraim.” Idolatry had long been the prevailing religion in that kingdom, and Ephraim its head-quarters. As to the other part of the prophet's advice (*v.* 8), considerable obscurity hangs over it as the text stands; and hence some able critics have suggested the insertion of “not” in the middle clause, so that the verse will be thus: “But if thou wilt go (alone), do, be strong for the battle; God shall *not* make thee fall before the enemy.” **10. separated them . . . the army out of Israel . . . their anger was kindled against Judah**—Amaziah, who knew his position as the Lord's viceroy, complied with the prophet's counsel, and consenting to forfeit the purchase-money of the Israelitish soldiers, discharged them. Exasperated at this treatment, they resolved to indemnify themselves for the loss of their expected booty, and so on their return home they plundered all the towns in their way, committing great havoc both of life and property, without any stoppage, as the king of Judah and his army had set out on their expedition (2 Kings, 14. 7).

**11. valley of Salt**—This ravine lies to the south of the Dead Sea. The arms of

Amaziah, in reward for his obedience to the Divine will, were crowned with victory—10,000 of the Edomites were slain on the field, and as many taken prisoners, who were put to death by precipitation “from the top of the rock.” This rock might be situated in the neighbourhood of the battle-field, but more probably it formed one of the high craggy cliffs of Selah (Petra), the capital of the Edomites, whither Amaziah marched directly from the valley of Salt, and which he captured (2 Kings, 14. 7). The savage cruelty dealt out to them was either in retaliation for similar barbarities inflicted on the Hebrews, or to strike terror into so rebellious a people for the future. The mode of execution, by dashing against stones (Psalm, 137. 9). was common among many ancient nations. 14-16. **Amaziah brought the gods of the children of Seir**—The Edomites worshipped the Sun, under different forms and with various rites. But burning incense upon altars was a principal act of worship, and this was the very thing Amaziah is described as having, with strange infatuation, performed. Whether he had been captivated with the beauty of the images, or hoped by honouring the gods to disarm their spite at him for his conquest and harsh treatment of their votaries, his conduct in establishing these objects of religious homage in Jerusalem was foolish, ignorant and highly offensive to God, who commissioned a prophet to rebuke him for his apostacy, and threatened him with the calamity that soon after befel him. 16. **as he talked with him, &c.**—Those who were invested with the prophetic character were entitled to counsel kings, and Amaziah, had he not been offended by unwelcome truths, would have admitted the claim of this prophet, who was probably the same that had given him counsel previous to the war with Edom. But victory had elated and blinded him.

17. **HE PROVOKES JOASH TO HIS OVERTHROW.** 17. **Then Amaziah sent to Jehohaz . . . Come, let us see one another in the face**—(see 2 Kings, 14. 8-20).

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1-8. **UZZIAH SUCCEEDS AMAZIAH AND REIGNS WELL IN THE DAYS OF ZECHARIAH.** 1. **Then all the people of Judea took Uzziah**—(see 2 Kings. 14. 21. 22; 15. 1-3). 2. **He built Eloth**—or “He it was who built Eloth.” The account of the fortifications of this port on the Red Sea, which Uzziah restored to the kingdom of Judah (ch. 33. 13), is placed before the chronological notices (v. 3), either on account of the importance attached to the conquest of Eloth or from the desire of the historian to introduce Uzziah as the king, who was known as the conqueror of Eloth. Besides, it indicates that the conquest occurred in the early part of his reign—that it was important as a port and that Hebrew merchants maintained the old trade between it and the countries of the East. [BERTHEAU.] 5 **he sought God in the days of Zechariah**—A wise and pious counselor who was skilled in understanding the meaning and lessons of the ancient prophecies and who wielded a salutary influence over Uzziah. 6, 7. **went forth and warred against the Philistines**—He overcame them in many

engagements — dismantled their towns and erected fortified cities in various parts of the country keep them in subjection **Jabneh**, the same as Jabneel (Joshua, 15. 11). Gur-baal is thought by some to be Gerar and by others, Gebal. 8. **the Ammonites gave gifts** — The countries east of the Jordan became tributary to him, and by the rapid succession and extent of his victories his kingdom extended to the Egyptian frontier.

9. 10. HIS BUILDINGS. 9. **Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem, &c.** — Whence resistance could be made or missiles discharged against assailants. The sites of the principal of these towers were — at the corner gate (ch. 25. 23), the north-west corner of the city; at the valley gate on the west, where the Joppa gate now is; at the "turning" — a curve in the city wall on the eastern side of Zion. The town, at this point, commanded the horse-gate which defended Zion and the temple-hill on the south-east. [BERTHEAU.] 10. **Also he built towers in the desert** — for the three-fold purpose of defense — of observation — and of shelter to his cattle; he dug also a great many wells, for he loved and encouraged all branches of agriculture. Some of these "were in the desert," *i. e.*, in the district to the south-east of Jerusalem on the west of the Dead Sea — an extensive grazing district "in the low country," lying between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean: "and in the plains," east of the Jordan, within the territory of Reuben (Deuteronomy, 4. 43; Josh, 20. 8). **in Carmel** — This mountain being within the boundary of Israel, did not belong to Uzziah; and as it is here placed in opposition to the vine-bearing mountains, it is probably used, not as a proper name, but to signify, as the word denotes, "fruitful fields" (*Margin*).

11-15. HIS HOST AND ENGINES OF WAR. 11-15. **an host of fighting men who went out to war by bands** — He raised a strong body of militia, divided into companies or regiments of uniform amount, which served in rotation. The enumeration was performed by two functionaries expert in the drawing up of military muster-rolls, under the superintendence of Hananiah, one of the high officers of the crown. The army consisted of 307,500 picked men, under the command of two thousand gallant officers, chiefs or heads of fathers' houses, so that each father's house formed a distinct band. They were fully equipped with every kind of military accouterments from brazen helmets, a habergeon or coat of mail, to a sling for stones. 15. **made engines, invented by cunning men, to shoot arrows and great stones** — This is the first notice that occurs in history of the use of machines for throwing projectiles. The invention is apparently ascribed to the reign of Uzziah, and PLINY expressly says they originated in Syria. **he was marvelously helped till he was strong** — He conducted himself as became the viceroy of the Divine King and prospered.

16-21. HE INVADERS THE PRIEST'S OFFICE AND IS SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY. 16-21. **he transgressed against the Lord, &c.** — (see 2 Kings, 15. 5). This daring and wicked act is, in both records, traced to the intoxicating influence of overweening pride and vanity. But here the additional circumstances are stated that his

entrance was opposed, and strong remonstrances made (1 Chronicles, 6. 10) by the high priest, who was accompanied by eighty inferior priests. Rage and threats were the only answers he deigned to return, but God took care to vindicate the sacredness of the priestly office, and, at the moment of the king's lifting the censer, struck him with leprosy. The earthquake mentioned (Amos, 1. 1) is said to have been felt at the moment. [JOSEPHUS.] 21. **dwelt in a several house** — in an infirmary. [BERTHEAU.] 23. **they buried him . . . in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings** — He was interred not in, but near, the sepulcher of the kings, as the corpse of a leper would have polluted it.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

**1-4. JOTHAM REIGNING WELL, PROSPERS.** 1. **Jotham was twenty and five years old** — (See 2 Kings, 15. 32-35). **His mother's name . . . was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok** — or descendant of the famous priest of that name. 2. **he did that which was right** — The general rectitude of his government is described by representing it as conducted on the excellent principles which had guided the early part of his father's reign. **the people did yet corruptly** — (see 2 Kings, 15. 35); but the description here is more emphatic, that though Jotham did much to promote the good of his kingdom, and aimed at a thorough reformation in religion, the wide-spread and inveterate wickedness of the people frustrated all his laudable efforts. 3. **He built the high gate of the house of the Lord** — situated on the north — that portion of the temple hill which was high compared with the southern part — hence "the higher," or upper gate (2 Kings, 15. 35). **He built, i. e., repaired or embellished. and on the wall of Ophel** — *Hebrew*, the Ophel, *i. e.,* the mound, or eminence on the south-eastern slope of the temple mount, a ridge lying between the valleys Kedron and Tyropœon, called "the lower city." [JOSEPHUS.] He "built much," having the same desire as his father to secure the defense of Jerusalem in every direction. 4. **in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers** — *i. e.,* in the elevated and wooded spots where fortified cities could not be placed, he erected castles and towers.

**5-9. HE SUBDUES THE AMMONITES.** 5. **He fought with the king of the Ammonites** — The invasion he not only repelled, but, pursuing the Ammonites into their own territory, imposed on them a yearly tribute, which, for two years, they paid; but when Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, combined to attack the kingdom of Judah, they took the opportunity of revolting, and Jotham was too distracted by other matters to attempt the re-conquest (see 2 Kings, 15. 37).

CHAPTER XXVIII.

**1-21. AHAZ, REIGNING WICKEDLY, IS AFFLICTED BY THE SYRIANS.** 1-4. **Ahaz was twenty years old**—(see 2 Kings, 16. 1-4). This prince, discarding the principles and example of his excellent father, early betrayed a strong bias to idolatry. He ruled with an arbitrary and absolute authority, and not as a theocratic sovereign; he not only forsook the temple of God, but embraced first the symbolic worship established in the sister kingdom, and afterward the gross idolatry practiced by the Canaanites. 5, 6. **The Lord . . . delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria . . . he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel**—These verses, without alluding to the formation of a confederacy between the Syrian and Israelitish kings to invade the kingdom of Judah, or relating the commencement of the war in the close of Jotham's reign (2 Kings, 15. 37), give the issue only of some battles that were fought in the early part of the campaign. **delivered him . . . smote him . . . he was also delivered**—*i. e.*, his army, for Ahaz was not personally included in the number either of the slain or the captives. The slaughter of 120,000 in one day was a terrible calamity, which, it is expressly said (*v.* 6), was inflicted as a judgment on Judah, "because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers." Among the slain were some persons of distinction, "Maaseiah the king's son." The sons of Ahaz being too young to take part in a battle, this individual must have been a younger son of the late King Jotham. "Azrikam, the governor of the house," *i. e.*, the palace; and "Elkanah that was next to the king," *i. e.*, the vizier or prime minister (Genesis, 41. 40; Esther, 10. 3). These were all cut down on the field by Zichri, an Israelitish warrior, or, as some think, ordered to be put to death, after the battle. A vast number of captives also fell into the power of the conquerors; and an equal division of war prisoners being made between the allies, they were sent off under a military escort to the respective capitals of Syria and Israel. 8. **The children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand**—These captives included a great number of women, boys and girls, a circumstance which creates a presumption that the Hebrews, like other Orientals, were accompanied in the war by multitudes of non-combatants (see Judges, 4. 8). The report of these "brethren," being brought as captives to Samaria, excited general indignation among the better disposed inhabitants; and Oded, a prophet, accompanied by the princes (*v.* 12, compared with *v.* 14), went out, as the escort was approaching, to prevent the disgraceful outrage of introducing such prisoners into the city. The officers of the squadron were, of course, not to blame; they were simply doing their military duty in conducting those prisoners of war to their destination. But Oded clearly showed that the Israelitish army had gained the victory—not by the superiority of their arms, but in consequence of the Divine judgment against Judah; he forcibly exposed the enormity of the offense of keeping "their brethren" as slaves got

in war; he protested earnestly against adding this great offense of unnatural and sinful cruelty (Leviticus, 25. 43, 44; Micah, 2. 8, 9) to the already overwhelming amount of their own national sins; and such was the effect of his spirited remonstrance, and the opposing tide of popular feeling, "that the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation."

15. **the men which were expressed by name rose up** — These were either the "heads of the children of Ephraim" (mentioned, *v.* 12), or some other leading individuals chosen for the benevolent office. Under their kindly superintendence, the prisoners were not only released, but out of the spoils were comfortably relieved with food and clothing and conveyed as far as Jericho on their way back to their own homes. This is a beautiful incident, and full of interest, as showing that even at this period of national decline there were not a few who steadfastly adhered to the law of God.

16. **At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria** — "Kings," the plural for the singular, which in many ancient versions is found. "At that time," refers to the period of Ahaz's great distress, when, after a succession of defeats, he retreated within the walls of Jerusalem, whither — either in the same or a subsequent campaign — the Syrian and Israelitish allies marched to besiege him (see 2 Kings, 16. 7-9). Though delivered from this danger, other enemies infested his dominions both on the south and the west.

17. **again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah** — This invasion must have been after Rezin (at the beginning of the late Syrio-Israelitish war) had released that people from the yoke of Judah (ch. 15. 11; Cf. 2 Kings, 16. 6).

18. **Gederoth** — On the Philistine frontier (Joshua, 15. 41). **Shoco** — or Socah (Joshua, 15. 35), now Shuweikeh, a town in the Valley of Judah (see 1 Samuel, 17. 1). **Gimzo** — now Jimza, a little east of Ludd (Lydda). [ROBINSON.] All these disasters, by which the "Lord brought Judah low," was because of Ahaz, king of Israel (Judah, see ch. 21. 2; 24. 16; 28. 27), who made Judah naked and transgressed sore against the Lord.

20. **Tilgath-pilneser . . . distressed him, but strengthened him not** — *i. e.*, Notwithstanding the temporary relief which Tilgath-pilneser afforded him by the conquest of Damascus and the slaughter of Rezin (2 Kings, 16. 9), little advantage resulted from it, for Tilgath-pilneser spent the winter in voluptuous revelry at Damascus, and the connection formed with the Assyrian king was eventually a source of new and greater calamities and humiliation to the kingdom of Judah (*v.* 2, 3).

22-27. **HIS IDOLATRY IN HIS DISTRESS.** 22. **in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord** — This infatuated king surrendered himself to the influence of idolatry, and exerted his royal authority to extend it, with the intensity of a passion — with the ignorance and servile fear of a heathen (*v.* 23), and a ruthless defiance of God (see 2 Kings. 16. 10-20).

CHAPTER XXIX.

**1, 2. HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN.** 1. **Hezekiah began to reign.** &c.—(see 2 Kings, 18. 1-3). His mother's name, which, in the passage referred to, appears in an abridged form, is here given in full.

**3-11. HE RESTORES RELIGION.** 3. **in the first year of his reign, in the first month**—Not the first month after his accession to the throne, but in Nisan, the first month of the sacred year, the season appointed for the celebration of the passover. **he opened the doors of the house of the Lord**—Which had been closed up by his father (ch. 28. 24). **and he repaired them**—or embellished them (Cf. 2 Kings, 18. 16). 4. **the east street**—The court of the priests, which fronted the eastern gate of the temple. Assembling the priests and Levites there, he enjoined them to set about the immediate purification of the temple. It does not appear that the order referred to the removal of idols, for objects of idolatrous homage could scarcely have been put there, seeing the doors had been shut up; but, in its forsaken and desolate state, the temple and its courts had been polluted by every kind of impurities. 6. **our fathers have trespassed**—Ahaz and the generation contemporary with him were specially meant, for “they turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord,” and whether or not they turned east to the rising sun, they abandoned the worship of God. “They shut up the doors of the porch,” so that the sacred ritual was entirely discontinued. 8. **Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem**—This pious king had the discernment to ascribe all the national calamities that had befallen the kingdom to the true cause, viz., apostacy from God. The country had been laid waste by successive wars of invasion, and its resources drained, many families mourned members of their household still suffering the miseries of foreign captivity, all their former prosperity and glory had fled, and to what was this painful and humiliating state of affairs to be traced, but the manifest judgment of God upon the kingdom for its sins. 10, 11. **Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with God**—Convinced of the sin and bitter fruits of idolatry, Hezekiah intended to reverse the policy of his father, and to restore, in all its ancient purity and glory, the worship of the true God. His commencement of this resolution at the beginning of his reign attests his sincere piety, and it also proves the strength of his conviction that righteousness exalteth a nation, for, instead of waiting till his throne was consolidated, he devised measures of national reformation at the beginning of his reign, and vigorously faced all the difficulties which, in such a course, he had to encounter, after the people's habits had so long been moulded to idolatry. His intentions were first disclosed to this meeting of the priests and Levites—for the agency of these officials was to be employed in carrying them into effect.

**12-36. THE HOUSE OF GOD CLEANSED.** 12. **Then the Levites arose**—Fourteen chiefs undertook the duty of collecting and



preparing their brethren for the important work of "cleansing the Lord's house." Beginning with the outer courts—that of the priests and that of the people—the cleansing of these occupied eight days, after which they set themselves to purify the interior; but as the Levites were not allowed to enter within the walls of the temple, the priests brought all the sweepings out to the porch, where they were received by the Levites and thrown into the brook Kedron. This took eight days more; and, at the end of this period, they repaired to the palace and announced that not only had the whole of the sacred edifice, within and without, undergone a thorough purification, but all the vessels which the late king had taken away and applied to a common use in his palace, had been restored "and sanctified." 20. **Then Hezekiah the king rose early and gathered the rulers of the city**—His anxiety to enter upon the expiatory service with all possible dispatch, now that the temple had been properly prepared for it, prevented his summoning the whole representatives of Israel. The requisite number of victims having been provided, and the officers of the temple having sanctified themselves according to the directions of the law, the priests were appointed to offer sacrifices of atonement successively for "the kingdom," *i. e.*, for the sins of the king and his predecessors—"for the sanctuary," *i. e.*, for the sins of the priests themselves, and for the desecration of the temple—"and for Judah," *i. e.*, for the people who, by their voluntary consent, were involved in the guilt of the national apostacy. Animals of the kinds used in sacrifice were offered by sevens—that number indicating completeness. The Levites were ordered to praise God with musical instruments, which, although not originally used in the tabernacle, had been enlisted in the service of Divine worship by David, on the advice of the prophets Gad and Nathan, as well calculated to animate the devotions of the people. At the close of the special services of the occasion, *viz.*, the offering of atonement sacrifices, the king and all civic rulers who were present joined in the worship. A grand anthem was sung (*v.* 30) by the choir, consisting of some of the Psalms of David and Asaph, and a great number of thank-offerings, praise-offerings and free-will burnt-offerings were presented at the invitation of the king. 31. **Hezekiah . . . said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near**—This address was made to the priests as being now, by the sacrifice of the expiation offerings, anew consecrated to the service of God and qualified to resume the functions of their sacred office (Exodus, 28. 41; 29. 32). **the congregation brought in**—*i. e.*, the body of civic rulers present. 34. **the priests were too few, wherefore their brethren, the Levites, did help them**—The skins of beasts intended as peace-offerings might be taken off by the officers, because, in such cases, the carcass was not wholly laid upon the altar; but animals meant for burnt-offerings, which were wholly consumed by fire, could be flayed by the priests alone, not even Levites being allowed to touch them, except in cases of unavoidable necessity (ch. 35. 11). The duty being assigned by the law to the priests (Leviticus, 1. 6) was construed

by consuetudinary practice as an exclusion of all others not connected with the Aaronic family. **for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests**—*i. e.*, displayed greater alacrity than the priests. This service was hastened on by the irrepressible solicitude of the king; and whether it was that many of the priests being absent in the country, had not arrived in time—whether from the long interruption of the public duties, some of them had relaxed in their wonted attentions to personal cleanliness and had many preparations to make, or whether from some having participated in the idolatrous services introduced by Ahaz, they were backward in repairing to the temple—a reflection does seem to be cast upon their order as dilatory and not universally ready for duty (Cf. ch. 30. 15). Thus was the newly consecrated temple re-opened to the no small joy of the pious king and all the people.

### CHAPTER XXX.

**1-12. HEZEKIAH PROCLAIMS A PASSOVER.** I. **Hezekiah sent to all . . . Judah . . . to come to . . . Jerusalem to keep the passover**—This great religious festival had not been regularly observed by the Hebrews in their national capacity for a long time, in consequence both of the division of the kingdom and the many disorders that had followed that unhappy event. Hezekiah longed extremely to see its observance revived; and the expression of his wishes having received a hearty response from the princes and chief men of his own kingdom, the preparatory steps were taken for a renewed celebration of the national solemnity. **letters to Ephraim and Manasseh**—The names of these leading tribes are used for the whole kingdom of Israel. It being judged impossible, however, that the temple, the priests and the people could be all duly sanctified at the usual time appointed for the anniversary, viz., the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan), it was resolved, instead of postponing the feast till another year, to observe it on the fourteenth day of the second month; a liberty which being, in certain circumstances (Numbers, 9. 6-13), granted to individuals, might, it was believed, be allowed to the whole people. Hezekiah's proclamation was, of course, authoritative in his own kingdom, but it could not have been made and circulated in all the towns and villages of the neighbouring kingdom without the concurrence, or at least the permission, of the Israelitish sovereign. Hoshea, the reigning king, is described as though evil in some respects, yet more favourably disposed to religious liberty than any of his predecessors since the separation of the kingdom. This is thought to be the meaning of the mitigating clause in his character (2 Kings, 17. 2). **the posts**—*i. e.*, runners or royal messengers, who were taken from the king's body-guard (ch. 23. 1, 2). Each, well-mounted, had a certain number of miles to traverse, and, having performed his course, was relieved by another who had to scour an equal extent of ground; so that, as the government messengers were dispatched in all directions, public edicts

were speedily diffused throughout the country. The proclamation of Hezekiah was followed by a verbal address from himself, piously urging the duty, and setting forth the advantages, of a return to the pure faith and institutions which God had delivered to their ancestors through Moses. **the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria**—This implies that several expeditions against Israel had already been made by Assyrian invaders—by Pul (2 Kings, 15. 19), but none of the people were then removed; at a later period by Tiglath-Pileser, when it appears that numbers among the tribes east of Jordan (1 Chronicles, 5. 26), and afterward in the northern parts of Israel (2 Kings, 15. 20), were carried into foreign exile. The invasion of Salmaneser cannot be alluded to, as it did not take place till the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kings, 17. 6; 18. 9-12). 10. **The posts passed from city to city**—It is not surprising that, after so long a discontinuance of the sacred festival, this attempt to revive it should, in some quarters, have excited ridicule and opposition; and, accordingly, among the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Zebulun, Hezekiah's messengers met with open insults and ill-usage. Numbers, however, in these very districts as well as throughout the kingdom of the ten tribes, generally complied with the invitation; while, in the kingdom of Judah, there was one unanimous feeling of high expectation and pious delight. The concourse that repaired to Jerusalem on the occasion was very great, and the occasion was ever after regarded as one of the greatest passovers that had ever been celebrated.

13-27. **THE ASSEMBLY DESTROY THE ALTARS OF IDOLATRY.** 14. **they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem**—As a necessary preparation for the right observance of the approaching solemnity, the removal of the altars was resolved upon which Ahaz had erected in the city (ch. 28. 24); for, as being the people of God, the Hebrews were bound to extirpate all traces of idolatry; and it was a happy sign and pledge of the influence of the Spirit pervading the minds of the people, when they voluntarily undertook this important preliminary work. 15. **the priests and the Levites were ashamed**—Though the Levites are associated in this statement, the priests were principally referred to; those of them who had been dilatory or negligent in sanctifying themselves (ch. 29. 34) were put to the blush and stimulated to their duty by the greater alacrity and zeal of the people. 16-18. **the priests sprinkled the blood which they received of the hand of the Levites**—This was a deviation from the established rules and practices in presenting the offerings of the temple; and the reason was, that numbers present on the occasion having not sanctified themselves, the Levites slaughtered the paschal victims (see ch. 35. 5) for every one that was unclean; while at other times the heads of families killed the lambs themselves, the priests receiving the blood from their hands and presenting it on the altar. Multitudes of the Israelites, especially from certain tribes (*v.* 18), were in this unsanctified state, and yet they ate the passover—an exceptional feature and one opposed to the law

(Numbers, 9. 6); but this exception was allowed in answer to Hezekiah's prayer (*v.* 18-20). **the Lord . . . healed the people** — We imagine the whole affair to have been the following: in consequence of their transgressions they had cause to fear disease and even death (Leviticus, 15. 31). Hezekiah prayed for the nation which was on the point of being diseased and might, therefore, be regarded as sick already. [BERTHEAU.] 21. **the children of Israel . . . kept the feast** — The time appointed by the law for the continuance of the feast was seven days; but, in consequence of its having been allowed to fall so long into disuse, they doubled the period of celebration and kept it fourteen days with unabated satisfaction and joy, materials for the additional sacrificial meals being supplied by the munificence of the king and the princes. **and a great number of priests sanctified themselves** — So that there would be a sufficient number of hands for the additional services.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

1-10. **THE PEOPLE FORWARD IN DESTROYING IDOLATRY. 1. all Israel . . . present went out into the cities of Judah** — The solemnities of this paschal season left a deep and salutary impression on the minds of the assembled worshippers; attachment to the ancient institutions of their country was extensively revived; ardour in the service of God animated every bosom; and, under the impulse of the devout feelings inspired by the occasion, they took measures at the close of the passover for extirpating idolatrous statues and altars out of every city, as at the beginning of the festival they had done in Jerusalem. **Judah and Benjamin** — denotes the southern kingdom. **Ephraim and Manasseh** — refer to the northern kingdom. This unsparing demolition of the monuments of idolatry would receive all encouragement from the king and public authorities of the former; and the force of the popular movement was sufficient to affect the same results among the tribes of Israel, whatever opposition the power of Hoshea, or the invectives of some profane brethren might have made. Thus the reign of idolatry being completely overthrown, and the pure worship of God re-established throughout the land, the people returned every one to their own home, in the confident expectation that, through the Divine blessing, they would enjoy a happy future of national peace and prosperity. 2. **Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests, &c.** — The king now turned his attention to provide for the orderly performance of the temple-worship — arranging the priests and Levites in their courses, assigning to every one his proper place and functions — and issuing edicts for the regular payment of those dues from which the revenues of the sanctuary were derived. To set a proper example to his subjects, his own proportion was announced in the first instance, for to the king it belonged, out of his privy purse, to defray the expenses of the altar, both stated and occasional (Numbers, 28. 3, 4, 9, 11, 19); and, in making this contribution from his own means,

Hezekiah followed the course which David and Solomon had taken before him (see ch. 8. 14; 1 Kings, 9. 25). Afterward he re-appointed the people's dues to the temple; and from its being necessary to issue a royal mandate in reference to this matter, it appears that the sacred tribute had been either totally neglected, or as the idolatrous princes were known to appropriate it to their own purposes, the people had in many cases refused or evaded the duty. But, on the improved state of public feeling, Hezekiah's commandment was readily obeyed, and contributions of first-fruits and tithes were poured in with great liberality from all parts of Judah, as well as from Israel. The first-fruits, even of some articles of produce that were unfit for sacrifice (Leviticus, 2. 11), such as honey (*Marg.* dates) were appropriated to the priests (Numbers, 18. 12, 13; Deuteronomy, 18. 4); the tithes (Leviticus, 27. 31) were intended for the support of the whole Levitical tribe (Numbers, 18. 8, 20, 24). 6. **and laid them by heaps**—The contributions began to be sent in shortly after the celebration of the passover, which had taken place in the middle of the second month. Some time would elapse before the king's order reached all parts of the kingdom. The wheat harvest occurred in the third month, so that the sheaves of that grain, being presented before any other, formed "the foundation," an under-layer in the corn-stores of the temple, and the first-fruits of their land produce being successively sent in all the summer till the close of the fruit and vintage season, *i. e.*, the seventh month, continued to raise heap upon heap. 9. **Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps**—The object of his inquiries was to ascertain whether the supplies afforded the prospect of a sufficient maintenance for the members of the sacred order. 10. **Azariah . . . answered . . . we have had enough**—This is probably the person mentioned (ch. 26. 17), and his reply was to the following purport: There has been an abundant harvest and a corresponding plenty in the incoming of first-fruits and tithes; the people have testified their gratitude to Him who has crowned the year with His goodness by their liberality toward His servants.

11-19. HEZEKIAH APPOINTS OFFICERS TO DISPOSE OF THE TITHES. 11. **Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord**—store-houses, granaries, or cellars; either the old ones, which had been allowed through neglect to fall into decay, were to be repaired, or additional ones built. Private individuals brought their own first fruits to the temple; but the tithes were levied by the Levites, who kept a faithful account of them in their several places of abode, and transmitted the allotted proportion to the priests. Officers were appointed to distribute equal rations to all in the cities of the priests who, from age or other reasons, could not repair to the temple. With the exception of children under three years of age—an exception made probably from their being considered unfit to receive solid food, lists were kept of the number and age of every male; of priests according to their fathers' house, and Levites from twenty years (see Numbers, 4. 3; 28. 24; 1 Chronicles, 23. 24). But, besides, provision was also made for their wives, daughters and servants. 18. **for in**

their set office they sanctified themselves—This is the reason assigned for providing for the wives and children out of the revenues of the sanctuary, that priests, withdrawing from those secular pursuits by which they might have maintained their households, devoted themselves entirely to the functions of the ministry.

**20, 21. HIS SINCERITY OF HEART.** 20. **Hezekiah wrought that which was good and right**—He displayed the qualities of a constitutional king, in restoring and upholding the ancient institution of the kingdom, while his zealous and persevering efforts to promote the cause of true religion and the best interests of his subjects entitled him to be ranked with the most illustrious of his predecessors (2 Kings, 18. 5).

## CHAPTER XXXII.

**1-20. SENNACHERIB INVADES JUDAH.** I. **After these things, and the establishment thereof**—*i. e.*, the restoration of the temple worship. The precise date is given (2 Kings, 18. 13). Determined to recover the independence of his country, Hezekiah had determined to refuse to pay the tribute which his father had bound himself to pay to Assyria. **Sennacherib . . . entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities**—The whole land was ravaged; the strong fortresses of Ashdod (Isaiah, 20. 1), and Lachish had fallen; the siege of Libnah had commenced, when the king of Judah, doubting his ability to resist, sent to acknowledge his fault, and offer terms of submission by paying the tribute. The commencement of this Assyrian war was disastrous to Hezekiah (2 Kings, 18. 13). But the misfortunes of the early period of the war are here passed over, as the historian hastens to relate the remarkable deliverance which God wrought for his kingdom of Judah. 2-8. **when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib . . . was purposed to fight against Jerusalem**—An account of the means taken to fortify Jerusalem against the threatened siege is given only in this passage. The polluting or filling up of wells, and the altering of the course of rivers, is an old practice that still obtains in the wars of the East. Hezekiah's plan was to cover the fountain-heads, so that they might not be discovered by the enemy, and to carry the water by subterranean channels or pipes into the city—a plan which, while it would secure a constant supply to the inhabitants, would distress the besiegers, as the country all around Jerusalem was very destitute of water. 4. **So there was gathered much people, . . . who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land**—“Where these various fountains were, we have now no positive means of ascertaining; though Enrogel, and the spring now called the Virgin's Fount, may well be numbered among them. *Josephus* mentions the existence of various fountains without the city, but does not name any of them in this connection but Siloam. ‘The brook,’ however, is located with sufficient precision to enable us to trace it very definitely. We are told that “it ran through the midst of the land.” Now a stream running through either the

Kedron or Hinnom Valley could, in no proper sense, be said to run "through the midst of the land;" but one flowing through the true Gihon Valley and separating Akra and Zion from Bezetha, Moriah and Ophel, as a stream once, doubtless did, could, with peculiar propriety, be said to run *through the midst of the land*, on which the (Holy) City was built. And that this is the correct meaning of the phrase is not only apparent from the force of circumstances, but is positively so declared in the Septuagint where, moreover, it is called a "river" which, at least, implies a much larger stream than the Kedron and comports well with the marginal reading, where it is said to "overflow through the midst of the land." Previous to the interference of man there was, no doubt, a very copious stream that gushed forth in the upper portion of that shallow, basin-like concavity, north of Damascus Gate which is, unquestionably, the upper extremity of the Gihon Valley, and, pursuing its meandering course through this valley, entered the Tyropæon at its great southern curve down which it flowed into the valley of the Kedron." [BARCLAY'S CITY OF THE GREAT KING.] 5, 6. **he strengthened himself**—he made a careful inspection of the city defenses for the purpose of repairing breaches in the wall here, renewing the masonry there, raising projecting machines to the towers, and especially fortifying the lower portion of Zion, *i. e.*, Millo "(in) the original city of David." "In" is a supplement of our translators, and the text reads better without it, for it was not the whole city that was repaired but only the lower portion of Zion or the original "city of David." **he . . . gathered them together . . . in the street**—*i. e.*, the large open space at the gate of Eastern cities, and having equipped his soldiers with a full suit of military accoutrements he addressed them in an animating strain, dwelling on the motives they had to inspire courage and confidence of success, especially on their consciousness of the favour and helping power of God. 9-20. (See 2 Kings, 18. 17-35; also 19. 8-34). 18. **they cried with a loud voice . . . to the people of Jerusalem . . . on the wall**—It appears that the wall on the west side of the city reached as far to the side of the uppermost pool of Gihon, at that time, as it does now, if not farther, and the wall was so close to that pool that those sent to negotiate with the Assyrian general answered him in their own tongue (see 2 Kings, 18. 27).

21-23. AN ANGEL DESTROYS THE ASSYRIANS. 21. **an angel . . . cut off all the mighty men**—(see 2 Kings, 19. 35-37).

24-26. HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY. 24. **in those days Hezekiah was sick to the death**—(see 2 Kings, 20. 1-11).

27-33. HIS RICHES AND WORKS. **he had exceeding much riches and honour**—(Cf. 2 Kings, 20. 13; Isaiah, 39. 2.) A great portion of his personal wealth, like that of David and Uzziah, consisted in immense possessions of agricultural and pastoral produce. Besides, he had accumulated large treasures in gold, silver and precious things which he had taken as spoils from the Philistines, and which he had received as presents from neighbouring states, among which he was held in great honour as a king under the special protection of heaven. Much of his great wealth he ex-

pende in improving his capital, erecting forts, and promoting the internal benefit of his kingd m. 30. **Stopped the . . . water-course of Gihon, and brought it . . . to the west side of the city, &c.**— (Cf. 2 Kings, 20. 20.) Particular notice is here taken of the aqueduct, as among the greatest of Hezekiah's works. "In exploring the subterranean channel conveying the water from Virgin's Fount to Siloam, I discovered a similar channel entering from the north, a few yards from its commencement; and on tracing it up near the Mugarbin Gate, where it became so choked with rubbish that it could be traversed no farther, I there found it turn to the *west* in the direction of the south end of the cleft or saddle of Zion, and if this channel was not constructed for the purpose of conveying the waters of Hezekiah's aqueduct, I am unable to suggest any purpose to which it could have been applied. Perhaps the reason why it was not brought down on the Zion side was, that Zion was already well watered in its lower portion by the Great Pool, 'the lower pool of Gihon.' And, accordingly, *Williams* (HOLY CITY) renders this passage: 'He stopped the upper outflow of the waters of Gihon, and led them down westward to the city.'" [BARCLAY'S CITY OF THE GREAT KING.] The construction of this aqueduct required not only masonic, but engineering skill; for the passage was bored through a continuous mass of rock. Hezekiah's pool or reservoir, made to receive the water within the north-west part of the city, still remains. It is an oblong, quadrangular tank, 240 feet in length, from 144 to 150 in breadth, but from recent excavations appears to have extended somewhat farther toward the north.

31. **in the business of the ambassadors who sent . . . to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, &c.**— They brought a present (*v.* 23) (see 2 Kings, 20. 12, 13), and a letter of congratulation on his recovery, in which particular inquiries were made about the miracle of the sun's retrocession— a natural phenomenon that could not fail to excite great interest and curiosity at Babylon, where astronomy was so much studied. At the same time, there is reason to believe that they proposed a defensive league against the Assyrians. **God left him to try him, &c.**— Hezekiah's offense was not so much in the display of his military stores and treasures, as in not giving to God the glory both of the miracle and of his recovery, and thus leading those heathen ambassadors to know Him.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

1-10. MANASSEH'S WICKED REIGN. 1-2. **Manasseh . . . did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord**—(see 2 Kings, 21. 1-16).

11-19. HE IS CARRIED UNTO BABYLON, WHERE HE HUMBLER HIMSELF BEFORE GOD, AND IS RESTORED TO HIS KINGDOM. 11. **the captains of the host of the king of Assyria**— This king was Esarhaddon, who, after having devoted the first years of his reign to the consolidation of his government at home, turned his attention to repair the loss of the tributary provinces west of the Euphrates, which, on the disaster and death of Sennacherib, had taken the opportunity of shaking off the Assyrian yoke. Having overrun



Palestine and removed the remnant that were left in the kingdom of Israel, he despatched his generals, the chief of whom was Tartan (Isaiah, 20. 1), with a portion of his army for the reduction of Judah also. In a successful attack upon Jerusalem, they took multitudes of captives, and got a great prize, including the king himself, among the prisoners. **took Manasseh among the thorns**—This may mean, as is commonly supposed, that he had hid himself among a thicket of briars and brambles, and we know that the Hebrews sometimes took refuge from their enemies in thickets (1 Samuel, 13. 6). But, instead of the *Hebrew*, *Bacochim*, "among the thorns," some versions read *Bechayim*, "among the living," and so the passage would be "took him alive." **bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon**—The *Hebrew* word rendered fetters denotes properly two chains of brass. The humiliating state in which Manasseh appeared before the Assyrian monarch may be judged of by a picture on a tablet in the Khorsabad palace, representing prisoners led bound into the king's presence. "The captives represented appear to be inhabitants of Palestine. Behind the prisoners stand four persons with inscriptions on the lower part of their tunics; the first two are bearded, and seem to be accusers, the remaining two are nearly defaced; but behind the last appears the eunuch, whose office it seems to be to usher into the presence of the king those who are permitted to appear before him. He is followed by another person of the same race as those under punishment; his hands are manacled, and on his ankles are strong rings fastened together by a heavy bar." [NINEVEH AND ITS PALACES.] No name is given and, therefore, no conclusion can be drawn that the figure represents Manasseh; but the people appear to be Hebrews, and this pictorial scene will enable us to imagine the manner in which the royal captive from Judah was received in the court of Babylon. Esarhaddon had established his residence there, for though from the many revolts that followed the death of his father, he succeeded at first only to the throne of Assyria, yet having some time previous to this conquest of Judah, recovered possession of Babylon, this enterprising king had united under his sway the two empires of Babylon and Chaldea, and transferred the seat of his government to Babylon. 12, 13. **when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God**—In the solitude of exile or imprisonment, Manasseh had leisure for reflection. The calamities forced upon him a review of his past life, under a conviction that the miseries of his dethronement and captive condition were owing to his awful and unprecedented apostasy (*v.* 7) from the God of his fathers. He humbled himself, repented, and prayed for an opportunity of bringing forth the fruits of repentance. His prayer was heard; for his conqueror not only released him, but, after two years' exile, restored him, with honour and the full exercise of royal power, to a tributary and dependent kingdom. Some political motive, doubtless, prompted the Assyrian king to restore Manasseh, and that was most probably to have the kingdom of Judah as a barrier between Egypt and his Assyrian dominions. But God overruled this measure for higher purposes. Manasseh now showed himself, by the influence of sanctified affliction, a new and better man;

for he made a complete reversal of his former policy — by not only destroying all the idolatrous statues and altars he had formerly erected in Jerusalem, but displaying the most ardent zeal in restoring and encouraging the worship of God. 14. **he built a wall without the city . . . on the west side of Gihon . . . even to the entering in at the fish gate** — “The well-ascertained position of the fish gate shows that the Valley of Gihon could be no other than that leading north-west of Damascus Gate, and gently descending southward, uniting with the Tyropæon at the north-east corner of Mount Zion, where the latter turns at right angles and runs toward Siloam. The wall thus built by Manasseh on the west side of the valley of Gihon would extend from the vicinity of the north-east corner of the wall of Zion, in a northerly direction, until it crossed over the valley to form a junction with the outer wall at the trench of Antonia, precisely in the quarter where the temple would be most easily assailed.” [BARCLAY.] 17. **the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only** — Here it appears that the worship on high places, though it originated in a great measure from the practice of heathenism, and too often led to it, did not necessarily imply idolatry.

20-25. **HE DIES, AND AMON SUCCEEDS HIM.** 20, 21. **Manasseh slept with his fathers . . . Amon . . . began to reign** — (see 2 Kings, 21. 17-26).

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

1, 2. **JOSIAH'S GOOD REIGN.** 1. **Josiah was eight years old** — (see 2 Kings, 22. 1, 2). The testimony borne to the undeviating steadfastness of his adherence to the cause of true religion places his character and reign in honourable contrast with those of many of his royal predecessors.

3-7. **HE DESTROYS IDOLATRY.** 3. **in the eighth year of his reign** — This was the sixteenth year of his age, and, as the kings of Judah were considered minors till they had completed their thirteenth year, it was three years after he had attained his majority. He had very early manifested the piety and excellent dispositions of his character. In the twelfth year of his reign, but the twentieth of his age, he began to take a lively interest in the purgation of his kingdom from all the monuments of idolatry which, in his father's short reign, had been erected; and, at a later period, his increasing zeal for securing the purity of divine worship led him to superintend the work of demolition in various parts of his dominions. The course of the narrative in this passage is somewhat different from that followed in the Book of Kings. For the historian, having made allusion to the early manifestation of Josiah's zeal, goes on with a full detail of all the measures this good king adopted for the extirpation of idolatry, whereas the author of the Book of Kings sets out with the cleansing of the temple, immediately previous to the celebration of the Passover, and embraces that occasion to give a general description of Josiah's policy for freeing the land from idolatrous pollution. The exact chronological order is not followed either in Kings or Chronicles,

But it is clearly recorded in both that the abolition of idolatry began in the twelfth and was completed in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. Notwithstanding Josiah's undoubted sincerity and zeal, and the people's apparent compliance with the king's orders, he could not extinguish a strongly rooted attachment to idolatries introduced in the early part of Manasseh's reign. This latent predilection appears unmistakably developed in the subsequent reigns, and the Divine decree for the removal of Judah, as well as Israel, into captivity, was irrevocably passed.

4. **the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them** — He treated the graves themselves as guilty of the crimes of those who were lying in them. [BERTHEAU.];

5. **he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars** — A greater brand of infamy could not have been put on idolatrous priests than the disinterment of their bones, and a greater defilement could not have been done to the altars of idolatry than the burning upon them the bones of those who had there officiated in their life-time.

6. **with their mattocks** — or "in their deserts" — so that the verse will stand thus: "And so did (*viz.*, break the altars, and burn the bones of priests) he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their deserted suburbs." The reader is apt to be surprised on finding that Josiah, whose hereditary possessions were confined to the kingdom of Judah, exercised as much authority among the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon and others, as far as Naphtali, as he did within his own dominions; and therefore it is necessary to observe that, after the destruction of Samaria by Shalmanezzer, the remnant that continued on the mountains of Israel maintained a close intercourse with Judah, and looked to the sovereigns of that kingdom as their natural protectors. Those kings acquired great influence over them, which Josiah exercised in removing every vestige of idolatry from the land. He could not have done this without the acquiescence of the people in the propriety of this proceeding, conscious that this was conformable to their ancient laws and institutions. The Assyrian kings, who were now masters of the country, might have been displeased at the liberties Josiah took beyond his own territories. But either they were not informed of his doings, or they did not trouble themselves about his religious proceedings, relating, as they would think, to the god of the land, especially as he did not attempt to seize upon any place or disturb the allegiance of the people. [CALMET.]

8-18. HE REPAIRS THE TEMPLE. in the eighteenth year of his reign . . . he sent Shaphan — (see 2 Kings, 22. 3-9).

19-33. AND, CAUSING THE LAW TO BE READ, RENEWS THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND THE PEOPLE. 19. when the king had heard the words of the law, &c. — (see 2 Kings, 22. 11-20: 23. 1-3).

## CHAPTER XXXV.

**1-19. JOSIAH KEEPS A SOLEMN PASSOVER.** 1. **Moreover Josiah kept a passover** — (see 2 Kings, 23. 21-23.) The first nine verses give an account of the preparations made for the celebration of the solemn feast. The day appointed by the law was kept on this occasion (Cf. ch. 30. 2, 13). The priests were ranged in their courses, and exhorted to be ready for their duties in the manner that legal purity required (Cf. ch. 29. 5). The Levites, the ministers or instructors of the people in all matters pertaining to the Divine worship, were commanded (*v.* 3) to “put the holy ark in the house which Solomon did build.” Their duty was to transport the ark from place to place according to circumstances. Some think that it had been ignominiously put away from the sanctuary by order of some idolatrous king, probably Manasseh, who set a carved image in the house of God (ch. 33. 7), or Amon; while others are of opinion that it had been temporarily removed by Josiah himself into some adjoining chamber during the repairs of the temple. In replacing it, the Levites had evidently carried it upon their shoulders, deeming that still to be the duty which the law imposed on them. But Josiah reminded them of the change of circumstances, when, as the service of God was now performed in a fixed and permanent temple, they were not required to be bearers of the ark any longer, and, being released from the service, they should address themselves with the greater alacrity to the discharge of other functions. 4. **prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses** — *i. e.*, each course or division was to be composed of those who belonged to the same father's house. **according to the writing of David and . . . Solomon** — Their injunctions are recorded (ch. 8. 14; 1 Chronicles, 23; 24; 25; 26). 5. **stand in the holy place** — in the court of the priests, the place where the victims were killed. The people were admitted according to their families in groups or companies of several households at a time. When the first company entered the court (which consisted commonly of as many as it could well hold) the gates were shut, and the offering was made. The Levites stood in rows from the slaughtering places to the altar, and handed the blood and fat from one to another of the officiating priests (ch. 30. 16-18). 6. **So kill the passover, &c.** — The design of the minute directions given here was to facilitate the distribution of the paschal lambs. These were to be eaten by the respective families according to their numbers (Exodus, 12. 3). But multitudes of the people, especially those from Israel, having been reduced to poverty through the Assyrian devastations, were to be provided with the means of commemorating the passover; and, therefore, the king enjoined the Levites, that, when the paschal lambs were brought to them to be killed (7-9), they should take care to have every thing put in so orderly a train that the lambs, after due presentation, might be easily delivered to the various families to be roasted and eaten by themselves apart. 7. **Josiah gave to the people . . . lambs and kids** — these were in all probability des-

ted for the poor ; a lamb or a kid might be used at convenience (Exodus, 12. 5). **and . . . bullocks** — which were offered after the lambs on each of the successive days of the feast. 8. **his princes** — They gave to the priests and Levites ; as those of Hezekiah's princes (ch. 30. 24). They were ecclesiastical princes, viz., Hilkiah the high priest (ch. 34. 9), Zechariah, probably the second priest of the Eleazer (2 Kings, 16. 18), and Jehiel of the Ithamar line. And as the Levitical tribes were not yet sufficiently provided (v. 9), some of their eminent brethren, who had been distinguished in Hezekiah's time (ch. 31. 12-15), gave a large additional contribution for the use of the Levites exclusively. 10. **So the service was prepared, &c.**—All the necessary preparations having been completed, and the appointed time arrived for the passover, the solemnity was celebrated. One remarkable feature in the account is the prominent part that was taken by the Levites in the preparation of the sacrifices, viz., the killing and stripping of the skins, which were properly the peculiar duties of the priests ; but as those functionaries were not able to overtake the extraordinary amount of work, and the Levites had been duly sanctified for the service, they were enlisted for the time in this priestly employment. At the passover in Hezekiah's time, the Levites officiated in the same departments of duty, the reason assigned for that deviation from the established rule being the unprepared state of many of the people (ch. 30. 17). But on this occasion the whole people had been duly sanctified, and therefore the exceptional enlistment of the Levite's services must have been rendered unavoidably necessary from the multitudes engaged in celebrating the passover. 12. **they removed the burnt offerings** — Some of the small cattle being designed for burnt-offerings were put apart by themselves, that they might not be intermingled with the paschal lambs, which were carefully selected according to certain rules, and intended to be sacramentally eaten ; and the manner in which those burnt-offerings were presented seem to have been the following : "All the subdivisions of the different fathers' houses came one after another to the altar in solemn procession, to bring to the priests the portions which had been cut off, and the priests laid these pieces upon the fire of the altar of burnt-offering." 13. **they roasted the passover according to the ordinance** — (see Exodus, 12. 7-9), this mode of preparation was prescribed by the law exclusively for the paschal lamb, the other offerings and thank-offerings were cooked in pots, kettles, and pans (1 Samuel, 2. 14). **divided them speedily among the people** — The haste was either owing to the multiplicity of the priest's business, or because the heat and flavour of the viands would have been otherwise diminished. Hence it appears that the meal consisted not of the paschal lambs alone, but of the meat of the thank-offerings — for part of the flesh fell to the portion of the offerer who, being in this instance, the king and the princes, were by them made over to the people, who were recommended to eat them the day they were offered, though not absolutely forbidden to do so on the next (Leviticus, 7. 15-18). 14. **afterward they made . . . for themselves and for the priests** — The Levites rendered this aid to the

priests, solely from their being so engrossed the entire day that they had no leisure to provide any refreshments for themselves. 15. **And the singers, &c., were in their place** — While the priests and people were so much engaged the choir were not idle. They had to sing certain Psalms, viz., 113 to 118 inclusive, once, twice and even a third time, during the continuance of each company of offerers. As they could not leave their posts, therefore, for the singing was resumed as every fresh company entered, the Levites prepared for them also; for the various bands relieved each other in turns, and while the general choir were doing duty a portion of the tuneful brethren, relieved for a time, partook of the viands that were brought them. 18. **there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel** — One feature by which this passover was distinguished was the liberality of Josiah. But what distinguished it above all preceding solemnities was, not the imposing grandeur of the ceremonies nor the immensity of the assembled concourse of worshippers, for these, with the exception of a few from the kingdom of Israel, were confined to two tribes; but it was the ardent devotion of the king and people, the disregard of purely traditional customs, and the unusually strict adherence, even in the smallest minutiae, to the forms of observance prescribed in the book of the law, the discovery of an original copy of which had produced so great a sensation. Instead of "from the days of Samuel," the author of the Book of Kings says, "from the days of the Judges who judged Israel." The meaning is the same in both passages, for Samuel concluded the era of the Judges. **all Israel that were present** — the great majority of the people of the northern kingdom were in exile, but some of the remaining inhabitants performed the journey to Jerusalem on this occasion. 37,600 paschal lambs and kids were used which, at ten to a company, would make 376,000 persons attending the feast. 19. **In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept** — "It is said (2 Kings, 22. 3), that Josiah sent Shaphan to Hilkiah in the eighth month of that year." If this statement rests upon a historical basis, all the events narrated here (from ch. 34. 8 to ch. 35. 19) must have happened in about the space of five months and a-half. We should then have a proof that the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign was reckoned from the autumn (Cf. ch. 29. 3). "The eighth month" of the sacred year, in the eighteenth year of his reign, would be the *second* month of his eighteenth year and the first month of the new year would be the *seventh* month. [BERTHEAU.]

**20-27. HIS DEATH.** 20. **After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple** — he, most probably, calculated that the restoration of the Divine worship, with the revival of vital religion in the land would lead, according to God's promise and the uniform experience of the Hebrew people, to a period of settled peace and increased prosperity. His hopes were disappointed. The bright interval of tranquillity that followed his re-establishment of the true religion was brief. But it must be observed that this interruption did not proceed from any unfaithfulness in the Divine promise, but from the state into which the kingdom of Judah had

brought itself by the national apostacy which was drawing down upon it the long-threatened but long-deferred judgments of God. **Necho, king of Egypt, came . . . to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates** — Necho, son of Psammeticus, succeeded to the throne of Egypt in the twentieth year of Josiah. He was a bold and enterprising king, who entered with all his heart into the struggle which the two great powers of Egypt and Assyria had long carried on for the political ascendancy. Each jealous of the aggressive movements of its rival was desirous to maintain Palestine as a frontier barrier. After the overthrow of Israel, the kingdom of Judah became in that respect doubly important, and although the king and people had a strong bias for alliance with Egypt, yet from the time of Manasseh it had become a vassal of Assyria, and Josiah, true to his political no less than his religious engagements, thought himself bound to support the interests of his Assyrian liege-lord. Hence, when "Necho, king of Egypt, came up to fight against Carchemish, Josiah went out against him." Carchemish, on the eastern side of the Euphrates, was the key of Assyria on the west, and in going thither the king of Egypt would transport his troops by sea along the coast of Palestine, northward. Josiah, as a faithful vassal, resolved to oppose Necho's march across the northern parts of that country. They met in the "Valley of Megiddo," *i. e.*, the valley or plain of Esdraelon. The Egyptian king had come either by water or through the plains of Philistia, keeping constantly along the coast, round the north-west corner of Carmel, and so to the great plain of Megiddo. This was not only his direct way to the Euphrates, but the only route fit for his chariots, while thereby also he left Judah and Jerusalem quite to his right. In this valley, however, the Egyptian army had necessarily to strike across the country, and it was on that occasion that Josiah could most conveniently intercept his passage. To avoid the difficulty of passing the river Kishon, Necho kept to the south of it, and must, therefore, have come past Megiddo. Josiah, in following with his chariots and horsemen from Jerusalem, had to march northward along the highway through Samaria by Kefr-Kud (the ancient Caper-Cotia) to Megiddo. [VAN DE VELDE.] 21. **But he sent ambassadors . . . What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah?** — not wishing to spend time or strength in vain, Necho informed the king of Judah that he had no intention of molesting the Jews, that his expedition was directed solely against his old Assyrian enemy, and that he had undertaken it by an express commission from God. Commentators are not agreed, whether it was really a Divine commission given him through Jeremiah, or whether he merely used the name of God as an authority that Josiah would not refuse to obey. As he could not know the truth of Necho's declaration, Josiah did not sin in opposing him, or if he sinned at all, it was a sin of ignorance. The engagement took place. Josiah was mortally wounded. 24. **took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot** — the carriage he had for ordinary use and which would be more comfortable for the royal sufferer than the war-chariot. The death of this good king was the subject of universal and lasting regret. 25. **Jeremiah**

**lamented for Josiah, &c.** — the elegy of the prophet has not reached us; but it seems to have been long preserved among his countrymen, and chaunted on certain public occasions by the professional singers, who probably got the dirges they sang from a collection of funeral odes composed on the death of good and great men of the nation. The spot in the valley of Megiddo where the battle was fought was near the town of Hadad-Rimmon; hence the lamentation for the death of Josiah was called "The lamentation of Hadad-Rimmon in the Valley of Megiddo," which was so great and so long continued, that the lamentation of Hadad passed afterward into a proverbial phrase to express any great and extraordinary sorrow (Zechariah, 12. 11).

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

**1-4. JEHOAHAZ SUCCEEDING IS DEPOSED BY PHARAOH. 1. the people of the land took Jehoahaz** — Immediately after Josiah's overthrow and death, the people raised to the throne Shallum (1 Chronicles, 3. 15), afterward called Jehoahaz, in preference to his elder brother Eliakim, from whom they expected little good. Jehoahaz is said (2 Kings, 23. 30) to have received at Jerusalem the royal anointing — a ceremony not usually deemed necessary in circumstances of regular and undisputed succession. But in the case of Jehoahaz, it seems to have been resorted to, in order to impart greater validity to the act of popular election, and, it may be, to render it less likely to be disturbed by Necho, who, like all Egyptians, would associate the idea of sanctity with the regal anointing. He was the youngest son of Josiah, but the popular favourite, on account, probably, of his martial spirit (Ezekiel, 19. 3), and determined opposition to the aggressive views of Egypt. At his accession the land was free from idolatry; but this prince, instead of following the footsteps of his excellent father, adopted the criminal policy of his apostatizing predecessors, and through his influence, directly or indirectly used, idolatry rapidly increased (see 2 Kings, 23. 32). **2. he reigned three months in Jerusalem** — His possession of sovereign power was of but very brief duration; for Necho determined to follow up the advantage he gained in Judah, and, deeming it expedient to have a king of his own nomination on the throne of that country, he deposed the popularly elected monarch and placed his brother Eliakim or Jehoiakim on the throne, whom he anticipated to be a mere obsequious vassal. The course of events seems to have been this: on receiving intelligence after the battle of the accession of Jehoahaz to the throne, and perhaps also in consequence of the complaint which Eliakim brought before him in regard to this matter, Necho set out with a part of his forces to Jerusalem, while the remainder of his troops pursued their way at leisure toward Riblah, laid a tribute on the country, raised Eliakim (Jehoiakim) as his vassal to the throne, and, on his departure, brought Jehoahaz captive with him to Riblah. The old expositors mostly assumed that Necho, after the battle of Megiddo, marched directly against Carchemish, and



then, on his return, came to Jerusalem. The improbability, indeed the impossibility of his doing so appears from this: that Carchemish was from 400 to 500 miles from Megiddo, so that within "three months," an army could not possibly make its way thither, conquer the fenced city Carchemish, and then march back a still greater distance to Jerusalem, and take that city. [KEIL.] **an hundred talents of silver** — £3,418 15s. **and a talent of gold** — £5,475: total amount of tribute, £8,893 15s. **carried him (Jehoahaz) to Egypt — there he died** (Jeremiah, 22. 10-12).

**5-8. JEHOIAKIM, REIGNING ILL, IS CARRIED INTO BABYLON.** 5. **Jehoiakim . . . did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord** — *i. e.*, he followed the course of his idolatrous predecessors, and the people, to a great extent, disinclined to the reforming policy of his father, eagerly availed themselves of the vicious license which his lax administration restored. His character is portrayed, with a masterly hand, in the prophecy of Jeremiah (ch. 22. 13-19). As the deputy of the king of Egypt, he departed further than his predecessor from the principles of Josiah's government; and in trying to meet the insatiable cupidity of his master by grinding exactions from his subjects, he recklessly plunged into all evil. 6. **Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon** — This refers to the first expedition of Nebuchadnezzar against Palestine, in the life-time of his father Nabopolassar, who, being old and infirm, adopted his son as joint-sovereign, and dispatched him, with the command of his army, against the Egyptian invaders of his empire. Nebuchadnezzar defeated them at Carchemish, and drove them out of Asia, and reduced all the provinces west of the Euphrates to obedience, among the rest the kingdom of Jehoiakim who became a vassal of the Assyrian empire (2 Kings, 24. 1). Jehoiakim, at the end of three years, threw off the yoke, being probably instigated to revolt by the solicitations of the king of Egypt, who planned a new expedition against Carchemish. But he was completely vanquished by the Babylonian king, who stripped him of all his possessions between the Euphrates and the Nile (2 Kings, 24. 7). Then marching against the Egyptian's ally in Judah, he took Jerusalem, carried away a portion of the sacred vessels of the temple, perhaps in lieu of the unpaid tribute, and deposited them in the temple of his god, Belus, at Babylon (Daniel, 1. 2; 5. 2). Though Jehoiakim had been taken prisoner, and it was designed at first to transport him in chains to Babylon, he was allowed to remain in his tributary kingdom. But having given, not long after, some new offense, Jerusalem was besieged by a host of Assyrian dependents, in a sally against whom Jehoiakim was killed (see 2 Kings, 24. 2-7; also Jeremiah, 22. 18, 19; 36. 30). 9. **Jehoiachin was eight years old** — called also Jeconiah or Coniah (Jeremiah, 22. 23) — "eight" should have been "eighteen," as appears from 2 Kings, 24. 8, and also from the full development of his ungodly principles and habits (see Ezekiel, 19. 5-7). His reign being of so short duration cannot be considered at variance with the prophetic denunciation against his father (Jeremiah, 36. 30). But his appointment by the people gave umbrage to Nebuchadnezzar, who, "when the year was expired" (2. 10), *i. e.*, in the spring, when campaigns usually

began, came in person against Jerusalem, captured the city, and sent Jehoiachin in chains to Babylon, removing at the same time all the nobles and most skillful artizans, pillaging all the remaining treasures both of the temple and palace (see 2 Kings, 24. 8-17).

**11-21. ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN.** 11. **Zedekiah** — Nebuchadnezzar appointed him. His name, originally Mattaniah, was, according to the custom of Oriental conquerors, changed into Zedekiah, and, though the son of Josiah (1 Chronicles, 3. 15; Jeremiah, 1. 2, 3; 37. 1), he is called (*v.* 10) the brother of Jehoiachin, *i. e.*, according to the latitude of Hebrew style in words expressing affinity, his relative or kinsman (see 2 Kings, 24. 18; 26. 1-21). 13. **who had made him swear** — Zedekiah received his crown on the express condition of taking a solemn oath of fealty to the king of Babylon (Ezekiel, 17. 13), so that his revolt, by joining in a league with Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, involved the crime of perjury. His own pride and obdurate impiety, the incurable idolatry of the nation, and their reckless disregard of prophetic warnings, brought down on his already sadly-reduced kingdom the long threatened judgment of God. Nebuchadnezzar, the executioner of the Divine vengeance, commenced a third siege of Jerusalem, which, after holding out for a year and a half, was taken in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, resulting in the burning of the temple, with, most probably, the ark, and in the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah (see 2 Kings, 25; Ezekiel, 12. 13; 17. 16). 21. **until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths** — The return of every seventh was to be held as a sabbatic year, a season of rest to all classes, even to the land itself, which was to be fallow. This Divine institution, however, was neglected — how soon and how long appears from the prophecy of Moses (Leviticus, 26. 34) and of Jeremiah in this passage (see, also, *Marginal Reference*), which told that, for Divine retribution, it was now to remain desolate seventy years. As the Assyrian conquerors usually colonized their conquered provinces, so remarkable a deviation in Palestine from their customary policy must be ascribed to the overruling providence of God.

**22, 23. CYRUS' PROCLAMATION.** 22, 23. **the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus** — (see Ezra, 1. 1-3.)

# EZRA.

## CHAPTER I.

**1-6. PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.** 1. **In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia**—The Persian empire, including Persia, Media, Babylonia and Chaldea, with many smaller dependencies, was founded by Cyrus, B. C. 536. [HALES.] **that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled**—(see Jeremiah, 25. 12; 29. 10). This reference is a parenthetic statement of the historian, and did not form part of the proclamation. 2. **The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth**—though this is in the Oriental style of hyperbole (see, also, Daniel, 4. 1), it was literally true that the Persian empire was the greatest ruling power in the world at that time. **he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem**—the phraseology of this proclamation, independently of the express testimony of Josephus, affords indisputable evidence that Cyrus had seen, probably, through means of Daniel, his venerable prime minister and favourite, those prophecies in which, 200 years before he was born, his name, his victorious career, and the important services he should render to the Jews were distinctly foretold (Isaiah, 44. 28; 46. 1-4). The existence of predictions so remarkable led him to acknowledge that all his kingdoms were gifts bestowed on him by “the Lord God of heaven,” and prompted him to fulfill the duty which had been laid upon him long before his birth. This was the source and origin of the great favour he showed to the Jews. The proclamation, though issued “in the first year of Cyrus,” did not take effect till the year following. 3. **Who is there among you of all his people**—the purport of the edict was, to grant full permission to those Jewish exiles, in every part of his kingdom, who chose to return to their own country, as well as to recommend those of their countrymen who remained, to aid the poor and feeble on their way, and contribute liberally toward the rebuilding of the temple. 5, 6. **Then rose up the chief of the fathers, &c.**—The paternal and ecclesiastical chiefs of the later captivity, those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with some also from other tribes (1 Chronicles, 9. 3) who retained their attachment to the pure worship of God, naturally took the lead in this movement, and their example was followed by all whose piety and patriotism were strong enough to brave the various discouragements attending the enterprise. They were liberally assisted by multitudes of their captive countrymen, who, born in Babylonia, or comfortably established in it by family connections or the possession of property, chose to remain. It seems that their Assyrian friends and neighbours, too, either from a favourable disposition toward the Jewish faith, or from imitation of the court policy, displayed hearty good will and great liberality in aiding and promoting the views of the emigrants.

**7-11. CYRUS RESTORES THE VESSELS.** 7. **Cyrus . . . brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord**—though, it is said

(2 Kings, 24. 13), that these were *cut in pieces*, they would not be done to the large and magnificent vases, and if they had been divided, the parts could be re-united. But it may be doubted whether the *Hebrew* word rendered *cut in pieces*, does not signify merely *cut off, i. e.*, from further use in the temple. **II. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred**—The vessels here specified amount only to the number of 2,499. Hence it is probable that the larger vases only are mentioned, while the inventory of the whole, including great and small, came to the gross sum stated in the text. **Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah**—*i. e.*, Zerubbabel, son of Salathiel (Cf. ch. 3. 8 ; 5. 16). He was born in Babylon, and called by his family Zerubbabel, *i. e.*, stranger or exile in Babylon. Sheshbazzar, signifying "fire worshippers," was the name given him at court, as other names were given to Daniel and his friends. He was recognized among the exiles as hereditary prince of Judah. **them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem**—all the Jewish exiles did not embrace the privilege which the Persian king granted them. The great proportion, born in Babylon, preferred continuing in their comfortable homes to undertaking a distant, expensive and hazardous journey to a desolate land. Nor did the returning exiles all go at once. The first band went with Zerubbabel, others afterward with Ezra, and a large number with Nehemiah at a still later period.

## CHAPTER II.

**1-70. NUMBER OF THE PEOPLE THAT RETURNED. I. children of the province**—*i. e.*, Judea (ch. v. 8), so called as being now reduced from an illustrious, independent and powerful kingdom to an obscure, servile, tributary province of the Persian empire. This name is applied by the sacred historian to intimate that the Jewish exiles, though now released from captivity and allowed to return into their own land, were still the subjects of Cyrus, inhabiting a province dependent upon Persia. **came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city**—Either the city that had been occupied by his ancestors, or, as most parts of Judea were then either desolate or possessed by others, the city that was rebuilt and allotted to him now. **2. Which came with Zerubbabel**—He was the chief or leader of the first band of returning exiles. The names of other influential persons who were associated in the conducting of the caravan are also mentioned, being extracted probably from the Persian archives, in which the register was preserved: conspicuous in the number are Jeshua, the high priest, and Nehemiah. **3. The children**—This word, as used throughout this catalogue, means posterity or descendants. **4. children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five**—the number is stated in Nehemiah, vii, to have been only 652. It is probable that all mentioned as belonging to this family repaired to the general place of rendezvous, or had enrolled their names at first as intending to go; but, in the interval of preparation, some died, others were prevented by sickness or insurmountable obstacles, so that ultimately no more than

652 came to Jerusalem. 23. **The men of Anathoth**—it is pleasant to see so many of this Jewish town returning. It was a city of the Levites; but the people spurned the prophetic warning, and called forth against themselves one of his severest predictions (Jeremiah, 33. 27-35). This prophecy was fulfilled in the Assyrian conquest. Anathoth was laid, and continued a heap of ruins. But the people having been brought during the captivity to a better state of mind, returned, and their city was rebuilt. 36-39. **The priests**—Each of their families was ranged under its prince or head, like those of the other tribes. It will be remembered that the whole body was divided into twenty-four courses, one of which, in rotation, discharged the sacerdotal duties every week, and each division was called after the name of its first prince or chief. It appears from this passage, that only four of the courses of the priests returned from the Babylonish captivity; but these four courses were afterward, as the families increased, divided into twenty-four, which were distinguished by the names of the original courses appointed by David. Hence we find the course of Abijah or Abia (1 Chronicles, 24. 10), subsisting at the commencement of the Christian era (Luke, 1. 5). 55. **The children of Solomon's servants**—either the strangers that monarch enlisted in the building of the temple or those who lived in his palace, which was deemed a high honour. 61, 62. **The children of Barzillai**—he preferred that name to that of his own family, deeming it a greater distinction to be connected with so noble a family than to be of the house of Levi. But by this worldly ambition he forfeited the dignity and advantages of the priesthood. 63. **Tirshatha**—a title borne by the Persian governors of Judea (see also Nehemiah, 7. 65-70; 8. 9; 10. 1). It is derived from the Persic *torsh*, "severe," and is equivalent to "your severity," "your awfulness." 64. **the whole congregation, together, was forty-two thousand three hundred and threescore**—this gross amount is 12,000 more than the particular numbers given in the catalogue, when added together, come to. Reckoning up the smaller numbers we shall find that they amount to 29,818, in this chapter, and to 31,089 in the parallel chapter of Nehemiah. Ezra also mentions 494 persons omitted by Nehemiah, and Nehemiah mentions 1,765 not noticed by Ezra. If, therefore, Ezra's surplus be added to the sum in Nehemiah, and Nehemiah's surplus to the number in Ezra, they will both become 31,583. Subtracting this from 42,360, there will be a deficiency of 10,777. These are omitted because they did not belong to Judah and Benjamin or to the priests—but to the other tribes. The servants and singers, male and female, are reckoned separately (*v.* 65), so that putting all these items together, the number of all who went with Zerubbabel amounted to 50,000, with 8,000 beasts of burden. (ALTING quoted DAVIDSON'S HERMENEUTICS). 68. **some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the Lord, offered freely for the house of God, &c.**—the sight of a place hallowed by the most endearing and sacred associations but now lying in desolation and ruins, made the well-springs of their piety and patriotism gush out afresh, and before taking any active measures for pro-

viding accommodation to themselves and their families, the chief among them raised a large sum by voluntary contributions toward the restoration of the temple. 69. **drams of gold**—rather darics, a Persian coin (see I Chronicles, 29. 7). **priests' garments**—(Cf. Nehemiah, 7. 70). This—in the circumstances—was a very appropriate gift. In general, it may be remarked that presents of garments or of any other usable commodities, however singular it may seem to us, is in unison with the established notions and customs of the East.

### CHAPTER III.

**1-3. THE ALTAR SET UP.** 1. **when the seventh month was come**—the departure of the returning exiles from Babylon took place in spring, and for some time after their arrival, they were occupied in the necessary work of rearing habitations to themselves, amid the ruins of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. This preliminary work being completed, they addressed themselves to rebuild the altar of burnt offering, and, as the seventh month of the sacred year was at hand—corresponding to the latter end of our September—when the feast of tabernacles (Leviticus, 23) fell to be observed, they resolved to celebrate that religious festival, just as if the temple had been fully restored. 2. **Jeshua**—was the grandson of Seraiah, the high priest, put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (2 Kings, 25, 18-21). His father, Josedech, had been carried captive to Babylon, and died there sometime before this. **Zerubbabel**—was, according to the order of nature, son of Pedaiah (I Chronicles, 3. 17-19), but having been brought up by Salathiel, was called his son. **buildded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon**—This was of urgent and immediate necessity, in order, first, to make atonement for their sins; secondly, to obtain the Divine blessing on their preparations for the temple, as well as animate their feelings of piety and patriotism for the prosecution of that national work. 3. **they set the altar upon his bases**—*i. e.*, they reared it upon its old foundation, so that it occupied as nearly as possible the site on which it had formerly stood. **they offered burnt offerings . . . morning and evening**—Deeming it their duty to perform the public rites of religion, they did not wait till the temple should be rebuilt and dedicated; but, at the outset, resumed the daily service prescribed by the law (Exodus, 29. 38, 39, Leviticus, 6. 9, 11), as well as observed the annual seasons of solemn observance.

**4-7. OFFERINGS RENEWED.** 4. **They kept also the feast of tabernacles . . . From the first day of the seventh month.** They revived at that time the daily oblation, and it was on the fifteenth day of that month the feast of tabernacles was held. 7. **They gave . . . meat . . . drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon**—they opened negotiations with the Tyrians for workmen, as well as for timber, on the same terms and with the same views as Solomon had done (I Kings, 5. 11; 2 Chronicles, 2. 15, 16).

**8-13. THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE LAID.** 8. **appointed the Levites . . . to set forward the work**—*i. e.*, to act as overseers

of the workmen, and to direct and animate the labourers in the various departments. 9. **Jeshua with his sons** — not the highest priest, but a Levite (ch. 2. 40). To these, as probably distinguished for their mechanical skill and taste, the duty of acting as overseers was particularly committed. 12. **But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers . . . wept with a loud voice** — Those painful emotions were excited by the sad contrast between the prosperous circumstances in which the foundations of the first temple had been laid, and the desolate, reduced state of the country and city when the second was begun; between the inferior size and costliness of the stones used in the foundation of the second (1 Kings, 7. 9, 10), and the much smaller extent of the foundation itself, including all the appurtenances of the building (Haggai, 2. 3); between the comparative smallness of their present means and the immense resources of David and Solomon. Perhaps, however, the chief cause of grief was, that the second temple would be destitute of those things which formed the great and distinguishing glory of the first, viz., the Ark, the Shechinah, the Urim and Thummim, &c. Not that this second temple was not a very grand and beautiful structure. But how great soever its material splendour, it was inferior in this respect to that of Solomon. Yet the glory of the second far outshone that of the first temple in another and more important point of view, viz., the receiving within its walls the incarnate Saviour (Haggai, 2. 9). 13. **the people could not discern the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping** — Among Eastern people, expressions of sorrow are always very loud and vehement. It is indicated by wailing, the howl of which is sometimes not easily distinguishable from joyful acclamations.

## CHAPTER IV.

1-6. THE BUILDING HINDERED. 1. **the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin** — *i. e.*, strangers settled in the land of Israel. 2. **we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon . . . which brought us up hither** — a very interesting explanation of this passage has been recently obtained from the Assyrian sculptures. On a large cylinder, deposited in the British Museum, there is inscribed a long and perfect copy of the annals of Esar-haddon, in which the details are given of a large deportation of Israelites from Palestinè, and a consequent settlement of Babylonian colonists in their place. It is a striking confirmation of the statement made in this passage. Those Assyrian settlers intermarried with the remnant of Israelite women, and their descendants, a mongrel race went under the name of Samaritans. Though originally idolaters they were instructed in the knowledge of God, so that they could say, "We seek your God;" but they served Him in a superstitious way of their own (see 2 Kings, 17. 26-34, 41). 3. **But Zerubbabel and Jeshua . . . said . . . Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God** — This refusal to co-operate with the Samaritans, from whatever motives it sprang, was overruled by Providence to ultimate good;

for, had the two people worked together, familiar acquaintance and intermarriages would have ensued, and the result might have been a relapse of the Jews into idolatry, and most certainly, confusion and obscurity in the genealogical evidence that proved the descent of the Messiah; whereas, in their hostile and separate condition, they were jealous observers of each other's proceedings, watching with mutual care over the preservation and integrity of the sacred books, guarding the purity and honour of the Mosaic worship, and thus contributing to the maintenance of religious knowledge and truth. 4. **Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, &c.**—Exasperated by this repulse, the Samaritans endeavoured by every means to molest the workmen as well as obstruct the progress of the building; and, though they could not alter the decree which Cyrus had issued regarding it, yet by bribes and clandestine arts indefatigably plied at court, they laboured to frustrate the effects of the edict. Their success in those underhand dealings was great, for Cyrus, being frequently absent, and much absorbed in his warlike expeditions, left the government in the hands of his son Cambyses, a wicked prince, and extremely hostile to the Jews and their religion. The same arts were assiduously practiced during the reign of his successor, Smerdis, down to the time of Darius Hystaspes. In consequence of the difficulties and obstacles thus interposed, for a period of twenty years, the progress of the work was very slow. 6. **in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they . . . an accusation**—Ahasuerus was a regal title, and the king referred to was successor of Darius, the famous Xerxes.

7-24. **LETTER TO ARTAXERXES.** 7. **in the days of Ahasuerus wrote Bishlam, &c.**—The three officers named as supposed to have been deputy-governors appointed by the king of Persia over all the provinces subject to his empire west of the Euphrates. **the Syrian tongue**—or Armæan language, called sometimes in our version Chaldee. This was made use of by the Persians in their decrees and communications relative to the Jews (Cf. 2 Kings, 18. 26; Isaiah, 36. 11). The object of their letter was to press upon the royal notice the inexpediency and danger of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. They laboured hard to prejudice the king's mind against that measure. 12. **the Jews which came up from thee to us**—The name "Jews" was generally used after the return from the captivity, because the returning exiles belonged chiefly to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and although the edict of Cyrus permitted all who chose to return, a permission of which some of the Israelites availed themselves, the great body who went to settle in Judea were the men of Judah. 13. **toll, tribute, and custom**—the first was a poll-tax; the second was a property tax; the third the excise dues on articles of trade and merchandise. Their letter and the edict that followed, commanding an immediate cessation of the work at the city walls, form the exclusive subject of narrative from *v.* 7 to *v.* 23. And now from this digression he returns at *v.* 24, to resume the thread of his narrative concerning the building of the temple. 9. **the Dinaites**—The people named were the colonists sent by the Babylonian monarch to occupy the terri-



tory of the ten tribes. "The great and noble Asnapper" was Esar-haddon. Immediately after the murder of Sennacherib, the Babylonians, Medes, Armenians, and other tributary people seized the opportunity of throwing off the Assyrian yoke. But Esar-haddon having, in the thirtieth year of his reign, recovered Babylon, and subdued the other rebellious dependents, transported numbers of them into the waste cities of Samaria, most probably as a punishment of their revolt [HALES.] 14. **we have maintenance from the king's palace**—*lit.*, we are salted with the king's salt. "Eating a prince's salt," is an Oriental phrase, equivalent to "receiving maintenance from him." 24. **Then ceased the work of the house of God**—It was this occurrence that first gave rise to the strong, religious antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans, which was afterward greatly aggravated by the erection of a rival temple on Mount Gerizim.

## CHAPTER V.

1-17. ZERUBBABEL AND JESHUA SET FORWARD THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IN THE REIGN OF DARIUS. 1. **Then the prophets . . . prophesied . . . in the name of the God of Israel**—From the recorded writings of Haggai and Zechariah, it appears that the difficulties experienced, and the many obstacles thrown in the way, had first cooled the zeal of the Jews in the building of the temple, and then led to an abandonment of the work, under a pretended belief that the time for rebuilding it had not yet come (Haggai, I. 2-11). For fifteen years the work was completely suspended. These two prophets upbraided them with severe reproaches for their sloth, negligence, and worldly selfishness (Haggai, I. 4), threatened them with severe judgments, if they continued backward, and promised that they would be blessed with great national prosperity if they resumed and prosecuted the work with alacrity and vigour. **Zechariah, the son of Iddo**—*i. e.*, grandson (Zechariah, I. 1). 2. **Then rose up Zerubbabel . . . and Jeshua . . . and began to build the house of God**—The strong appeals and animating exhortations of these prophets gave a new impulse to the building of the temple. It was in the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes that the work, after a long interruption, was resumed. 3, 4. **At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side of the river**—The Persian empire west of the Euphrates—included at this time Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Phœnicia, and other provinces subject to Darius. The empire was divided into twenty provinces called satrapies. Syria formed one satrapy, inclusive of Palestine, Phœnicia and Cyprus, and furnished an annual revenue of 350 talents. It was presided over by a satrap or viceroy, who at this time resided at Damascus, and though superior to the native governors of the Jews appointed by the Persian king, never interfered with their internal government, except when there was a threatened disturbance of order and tranquillity. Tatnai, the governor (whether this was a personal name or an official title is unknown), had probably been incited by the complaints and turbulent outrages of the Sa-

maritans against the Jews, but he suspended his judgment, and he prudently resolved to repair to Jerusalem, that he might ascertain the real state of matters by personal inspection and inquiry, in company with another dignified officer and his provincial council. 5. **But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, &c.**—The unusual presence, the imposing suite, the authoritative inquiries of the satrap appeared formidable, and might have produced a paralyzing influence or led to disastrous consequences, if he had been a partial and corrupt judge, or actuated by unfriendly feelings toward the Jewish cause. The historian, therefore, with characteristic piety, throws in this parenthetical verse to intimate that God averted the threatening cloud and procured favour for the elders or leaders of the Jews, that they were not interrupted in their proceedings till communications with the court should be made and received. Not a word was uttered to dispirit the Jews or afford cause of triumph to their opponents. Matters were to go on till contrary orders arrived from Babylon. After surveying the work in progress, he inquired, first, by what authority this national temple was undertaken; and, secondly, the names of the principal promoters and directors of the undertaking. To these two heads of inquiry, the Jews returned ready and distinct replies. Then having learned that it originated in a decree of Cyrus, who had not only released the Jewish exiles from captivity, and permitted them to return to their own land for the express purpose of rebuilding the house of God, but, by an act of royal grace, had restored to them the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried off as trophies from the former temple, Tatnai transmitted all this information in an official report to his imperial master, accompanying it with a recommendatory suggestion that search should be made among the national archives at Babylon for the original decree of Cyrus, that the truth of the Jews' statement might be verified. The whole conduct of Tatnai, as well as the general tone of his despatch, is marked by a sound discretion and prudent moderation, free from any party bias, and evincing a desire only to do his duty. In all respects he appears in favourable contrast with his predecessor Rehum (ch. 4. 9). 8. **the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones**—*lit.*, "stones of rolling"—*i. e.*, stones of such extraordinary size that they could not be carried—they had to be rolled or dragged along the ground. 13. **Cyrus the king... made a decree**—The Jews were perfectly warranted according to the principles of the Persian government to proceed with the building in virtue of Cyrus' edict. For everywhere a public decree is considered as remaining in force until it is revoked; but the "laws of the Medes and Persians changed not." 16. **Then came... Sheshbazzar... since that time even until now hath it been in building**—This was not a part of the Jews' answer—they could not have said this, knowing the building had long ceased. But Tatnai used these expressions in his report, either looking on the stoppage as a temporary interruption, or supposing that the Jews were always working a little, as they had means and opportunities.

## CHAPTER VI.

**1-12. DARIUS' DECREE FOR ADVANCING THE BUILDING. 1. Darius the king**—This was Darius Hystaspes. Great and interesting light has been thrown on the history of this monarch and the transactions of his reign, by the decipherment of the cuneatic inscriptions on the rocks at Behistun. **in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon**—An idea of the form of this Babylonian Register House, as well as the manner of preserving public records within its repositories, can be obtained; from the recent discoveries at Nineveh. Two small chambers were discovered in the palace of Konyunjik, which, from the fragments found in them, Mr. Layard considers "as a house of the rolls." After reminding his readers that the historical records and public documents of the Assyrians were kept on tablets and cylinders of baked clay, many specimens of which have been brought to this country, he goes on to say, "The chambers I am describing appear to have been a depository in the palace of Nineveh for such documents. To the height of a foot or more from the floor they were entirely filled with them, some entire, but the greater part broken into many fragments, probably by the falling in of the upper part of the building. They were of different sizes; the largest tablets were flat, and measured about 9 inches by 6 1-2 inches; the smaller were slightly convex, and some were not more than an inch long, with but one or two lines of writing. The cuneiform characters on most of them were singularly sharp and well defined, but so minute in some instances as to be almost illegible without a magnifying glass. These documents appear to be of various kinds. The documents that have thus been discovered "in the house of rolls" at Nineveh, probably exceed all that have yet been afforded by the monuments of Egypt, and when the innumerable fragments are put together and transcribed, the publication of these records will be of the greatest importance to the history of the ancient world (NINEVEH and BABYLON). **2. Achmetha**—Long supposed to be the capital of Greater Media. The Ecbatana of classical, the Hamadan of modern, times, at the foot of the Elwund range of hills, where, for its coolness and salubrity, Cyrus and his successors on the Persian throne established their summer residence. There was another city, however, of this name, the Ecbatana of Atropatene, and the most ancient capital of northern Media, and recently identified by Colonel Rawlinson in the remarkable ruins of *Takht-i-Soleiman*. Yet as every thing tends to show the attachment of Cyrus to his native city, the Atropatenian Ecbatana rather than to the stronger capital of Greater Media, Col. Rawlinson is inclined to think that he deposited there, in his war or fortress, the famous decree relating to the Jews along with the other records and treasures of his empire. [NINEVEH and PERSEPOLIS.] **8-10. of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river . . . expenses be given them**—The decree granted them the privilege of drawing from his provincial treasury of Syria, to the amount of whatever they required for the furthering

of the work and providing sacrifice for the service of the temple, that the priests might daily pray for the health of the king and the prosperity of the empire. **II. whosoever shall alter this word** — The warning was specially directed against the turbulent and fanatical Samaritans. The extremely favourable purport of this edict was, no doubt, owing in some measure to the influence of Cyrus, of whom Darius entertained a high admiration, and whose two daughters he had married. But it proceeded still more from the deep impressions made even on the idolatrous people of that country and that age, as to the Being and Providence of the God of Israel.

**13-15. THE TEMPLE FINISHED.** 13. **Then Tatnai . . . did speedily** — A concurrence of favourable events is mentioned as accelerating the restoration of the temple, and infusing a new spirit and energy into the workmen, who now laboured with unabating assiduity till it was brought to a completion. Its foundation was laid in April, 536 B. C. (ch. 3. 8-10), and it was completed on 21st of February, 515 B. C., being 21 years after it was begun. [LIGHT-FOOT.]

**16-18. FEASTS OF THE DEDICATION.** 16. **the children of Israel . . . kept the dedication . . . with joy** — The ceremonial was gone through with demonstrations of the liveliest joy. The aged, who had wept at the laying of the foundation, were most, if not all of them, now dead; and all rejoiced at the completion of this national undertaking. 17. **twelve he-goats** — as at the dedication of the tabernacle (Numbers, 8. 17). 18. **they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses . . . as it is written in the book of Moses** — Although David arranged the priests and Levites in courses according to their families, it was Moses who assigned to the priests and Levites their rights and privileges, their station and several duties.

**19-22. AND OF THE PASSOVER.** 21. **all such as had separated themselves . . . from the filthiness of the heathen** — *i. e.*, who had given satisfactory evidence of being true proselytes by not only renouncing the impure worship of idolatry, but by undergoing the rite of circumcision, a condition indispensable to a participation of the passover. 22. **kept the feast . . . with joy; for the Lord . . . turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them** — *i. e.*, king of the Persian empire, which now included the possessions, and had surpassed the glory, of Assyria. The favourable disposition which Darius had evinced toward the Jews secured them peace and prosperity, and the privileges of their own religion during the rest of his reign. The religious joy that so remarkably characterized the celebration of this feast, was testified by expressions of lively gratitude to God, whose overruling power and converting grace had produced so marvelous a change on the hearts of the mighty potentates, and disposed them, heathens though they were, to aid the cause and provide for the worship of the true God,

## CHAPTER VII.

**1-10. EZRA GOES UP TO JERUSALEM.** **I. in the reign of Artaxerxes** — the Ahasuerus of Esther. **Ezra, the son of Seraiah** — *i. e.*, grandson or great-grandson. Seraiah was the high priest put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (2 Kings, 25. 18). A period of 130 years had elapsed between that catastrophe and the journey of Ezra to Jerusalem, and as a grandson of Seraiah, *viz.*, Jeshua, who held the office of high priest, had accompanied Zerubbabel in the first caravan of returning exiles, Ezra must have been in all probability a grandson descended, too, from a younger son, the elder branch being in possession of the pontificate. **6. This Ezra . . . was a ready scribe in the law of Moses** — The term "scribe" does not mean a penman, nor even an attorney well versant in forms of law, and skilled in the method of preparing public or private deeds. He was a rabbi, or doctor, learned in the Mosaic law, and in all that related to the civil and ecclesiastical polity and customs of the Hebrew people. Scribes of this description possessed great authority and influence (Cf. Matthew, 23. 25; Mark, 12. 28). **the king granted him all his request** — He left Babylon intrusted with an important commission to be executed in Jerusalem. The manner in which he obtained this office is minutely related in a subsequent passage. Here it is noticed, but with a pious acknowledgment of the Divine grace and goodness which disposed the royal mind in favour of Ezra's patriotic objects. The Levites, &c., did not go at that time, and are mentioned here by anticipation. **8. he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month** — *i. e.*, corresponding to the end of our July or beginning of our August. As he left Babylon on New Year's day (*v.* 9), the journey must have occupied not less than four months — a long period — but it was necessary to move at a slow pace, and by short, easy stages, as he had to conduct a large caravan of poor people, including women, children, and all their household gear (see ch. 8). **10. Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, &c.** — His reigning desire had been to study the Divine law — its principles, institutions, privileges and requirements; and now from love and zeal, he devoted himself, as the business of his life, to the work of instructing, reforming and edifying others.

**11-26. GRACIOUS COMMISSION OF ARTAXERXES.** **II. this is the copy of the letter that the king, Artaxerxes, gave** — The measure which this document authorized, and the remarkable interest in the Jews displayed in it were, most probably, owing to the influence of Esther, who is thought to have been raised to the high position of queen a few months previous to the departure of Ezra [HALES.] According to others who adopt a different chronology it was, more probably, pressed upon the attention of the Persian court by Ezra who, like Daniel, showed the prophecies to the king; or by some leading Jews, on his accession who, seeing the unsettled and disordered state of the colony after the death of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Haggai and Zechariah, recommended the appointment of a commission to reform abuses, suppress disorder and enforce the

observance of the law. 12. **Artaxerxes, king of kings** — That title might have been assumed as, with literal truth, applicable to him, since many of the tributary princes of his empire still retained the name and authority of kings. But it was as probably a mere Orientalism, denoting a great and powerful prince, as the heaven of heavens signified the highest heaven, and vanity of vanities, the greatest vanity. This vainglorious title was assumed by the kings of Assyria, from whom it passed to the sovereigns of Persia. **unto Ezra, the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven** — The appointment of Ezra to this influential mission was of the highest importance to the Hebrew people, as a large proportion of them were become, in a great measure, strangers both to the language and the institutions of their forefathers. 14. **sent of the king and of his seven counselors** — This was the fixed number of the privy council of the kings of Persia (Esther, i. 10, 14). The document describes, with great clearness and precision, the nature of Ezra's commission and the extent of power and prerogatives with which he was invested. It gave him authority, in the first place, to organize the colony in Judea and institute a regular government, according to the laws of the Hebrew people, and by magistrates and rulers of their own nation (*v.* 25, 26), with power to punish offenders by fines, imprisonment, exile or death, according to the degree of their criminality. Secondly, he was empowered to carry a large donation in money, partly from the royal treasury and partly raised by voluntary contributions among his countrymen, to create a fund out of which to make suitable provision for maintaining the regular worship of God in Jerusalem (*v.* 16, 17). Thirdly, the Persian officers in Syria were commanded to afford him every assistance, by gifts of money, within a certain specified limit, in carrying out the objects of his patriotic mission (*v.* 21). 22. **an hundred talents of silver** — £22,000, according to the rate of the silver talent of Babylon. Fourthly, Artaxerxes gave his royal sanction in establishment of the Divine law, which exempted priests and Levites from taxation or tribute, and confirmed to them the exclusive right to officiate in the sacred services of the sanctuary. And, finally, in the expression of the king's desire for the Divine blessing upon the king and his government (*v.* 23), we see the strong persuasion which pervaded the Persian court, and had been produced by the captivity of the Hebrew people as to the Being and Directing Providence of the God they worshipped. It will be observed, however, that the commission related exclusively to the rebuilding of the temple — not of the walls. The Samaritans (ch. 4. 20-22), had succeeded in alarming the Persian court by their representations of the danger to the empire of fortifying a city notorious for the turbulent character of its inhabitants and the prowess of its kings.

27-28. **EZRA BLESSES GOD FOR THIS FAVOUR.** 27. **Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers** — This devout thanksgiving is in unison with the whole character of Ezra, who discerns the hand of God in every event, and is always ready to express a pious acknowledgment for the Divine goodness.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1-14. EZRA'S COMPANIONS FROM BABYLON.** 1. **this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon**—The number given here amounts to 1,754. But this is the register of adult males only, and as there were women and children also (*v.* 21), the whole caravan may be considered as comprising between 6,000 and 7,000.

**15-20. HE SENDS TO IDDO FOR MINISTERS FOR THE TEMPLE SERVICE.** 15. **I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava**—This river has not been ascertained. The probability is, that the Ahava was one of the streams or numerous canals of Mesopotamia communicating with the Euphrates (CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE). But it was certainly in Babylonia on the banks of that stream; and perhaps in the neighbourhood of a town of the same name, was the place appointed for general rendezvous. The emigrants encamped there for three days, according to Oriental custom, while the preparations for the departure were being completed, and Ezra was arranging the order of the caravan. **I... found there none of the sons of Levi**—*i. e.*, the ordinary Levites. Notwithstanding the privilege of exemption from all taxes granted to persons engaged in the temple service, none of the Levitical tribes were induced to join the settlement in Jerusalem; and it was even not without difficulty Ezra persuaded some of the priestly families to accompany him. 16, 17. **Then sent I for Eliezer... with commandment unto Iddo the chief**—Ezra sent this deputation either by virtue of authority, which by his priestly character he had over the Levites, or of the royal commission with which he was invested. The deputation was dispatched to Iddo, who was a prince or chief of the Nethinims—for the Persian government allowed the Hebrews, during their exile, to retain their ecclesiastical government by their own chiefs, as well as to enjoy the privilege of free worship. Iddo's influence procured and brought to the camp at Ahava thirty-eight Levites, and 220 Nethinims, the descendants of the Gibeonites, who performed the servile duties of the temple.

**21-36. A FAST PROCLAIMED.** 21. **Then I proclaimed a fast there**—The dangers to traveling caravans from the Bedouin Arabs that prowl through the desert were in ancient times as great as they still are; and it seems that travelers usually sought the protection of a military escort. But Ezra had spoken so much to the king of the sufficiency of the Divine care of his people that he would have blushed to apply for a guard of soldiers; and therefore he resolved that his followers should, by a solemn act of fasting and prayer, commit themselves to the Keeper of Israel. Their faith, considering the many and constant perils of a journey across the Bedouin regions, must have been great, and it was rewarded by the enjoyment of perfect safety during the whole way. 24-32. **Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests... and weighed unto them the silver, &c.**—The custody of the contributions and of the sacred vessels was, during the journey, committed to twelve of the chief priests who, with the assistance of ten of their brethren, were

to watch closely over them by the way, and deliver them into the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. The treasures in silver and gold, according to the value of the Babylonian talent, amounted to about £515,000 sterling. 27. **two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold** — Almost all commentators agree in maintaining that the vessels referred to were not made of copper, but of an alloy capable of taking on a bright polish, which we think highly probable, as copper was then in common use among the Babylonians, and would not be as precious as gold. This alloy, much esteemed among the Jews, was composed of gold and other metals, which took on a high polish and was not subject to tarnish. [NOYES.] 31. **we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month** — Computing from the time of their setting out to the period of their arrival, they occupied about four months on the way. Their health and security were marvelous during so long a journey. The pilgrim-caravans of the present day perform long journeys through the wildest deserts of the East under the protection of a firman from the Porte, and an escort of soldiers. But for a large body, composed as that of Ezra — of some thousands of men, women and children, unaccustomed to travel, undisciplined to order, and without military strength, and with so large an amount of treasure tempting the cupidity of the marauding plundering tribes of the desert — to accomplish a journey so long and so arduous in perfect safety, is one of the most astonishing events recorded in history. Nothing but the vigilant care of a superintending Providence could have brought them securely to their destination. 33. **Now, on the fourth day was the silver . . . weighed in the house of our God** — Devoted the first three days after their arrival in Jerusalem to repose ; on the next, the treasures were weighed and handed over to the custody of the officiating priests of the temple. The returned exiles offered burnt-offerings, and Ezra delivered the royal commission to the satraps and inferior magistrates ; while the Levitical portion of them lent all the assistance they could in performing the additional work, which the arrival of so many new worshippers occasioned.

## CHAPTER IX.

1-4. EZRA MOURNS FOR THE AFFINITY OF THE PEOPLE WITH STRANGERS. I. **Now when these things were done** — The first days after Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem were occupied in executing the different trusts committed to him. The nature and design of the office with which the royal authority had invested him was publicly made known to his own people by the formal delivery of the contribution and the sacred vessels brought from Babylon to the priests to be deposited in the temple. Then his credentials were privately presented to the provincial governors ; and, by this prudent, orderly proceeding, he put himself in the best position to avail himself of all the advantages guaranteed him by the king. On a superficial view, every thing contributed to gratify his patriotic feelings in the apparently flourishing state of the church



and country. But a further acquaintance discovered the existence of great corruptions, which demanded immediate correction; and one was particularly brought under his notice as being the source and origin of all others, *viz.*, a serious abuse that was practiced respecting the law of marriage. **the princes came to me, saying**—The information they lodged with him was to the effect, that numbers of the people, in violation of the Divine law (Deuteronomy, 7. 2, 3), had contracted marriage with Gentile women, and that the guilt of the disorderly practice, far from being confined to the lower classes, was shared in by several of the priests and Levites, as well as of the leading men in the country. This great irregularity would inevitably bring many evils in its train; it would encourage and increase idolatry, as well as break down the barriers of distinction which, for important purposes, God had raised between the Israelites and all other people. Ezra foresaw these dangerous consequences, but was overwhelmed with a sense of the difficulty of correcting the evil; when matrimonial alliances had been formed, families had been reared, affections engaged, and important interests established. **3. when I heard this . . . I rent my garment and my mantle, &c.**—the outer and inner garment, which was a token not only of great grief, but of dread at the same time of the Divine wrath; “plucked off the hair of my head and my beard,” which was a still more significant sign of overpowering grief. **4. Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of . . . God, &c.**—All the pious people who revered God’s word, and dreaded its threatenings and judgments, joined with Ezra in bewailing the public sin, and devising the means of redressing it. **I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice**—The intelligence of so gross a violation of God’s law by those who had been carried into captivity on account of their sins, and who, though restored, were yet unreformed, produced such a stunning effect on the mind of Ezra that he remained for a while incapable either of speech or of action. The hour of the evening sacrifice was the usual time of the people assembling, and at that season, having again rent his hair and garments, he made public prayer and confession of sin.

**5-15. PRAYS TO GOD. 5. I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God**—The burden of his prayer, which was dictated by a deep sense of the emergency, was, that he was overwhelmed at the flagrant enormity of this sin, and the bold impiety of continuing in it, after having, as a people, so recently experienced the heavy marks of the Divine displeasure. God had begun to show returning favour to Israel by the restoration of some. But this only aggravated their sin, that so soon after their re-establishment in their native land they openly violated the express and repeated precepts, which commanded them to extirpate the Canaanites. Such conduct, he exclaimed, could issue only in drawing down some great punishment from offended heaven, and insuring the destruction of the small remnant of us that is left, unless, by the help of Divine grace, we repent, and bring forth the fruits of repentance in an immediate and thorough reformation.

## CHAPTER X.

**1-17. EZRA REFORMS THE STRANGE MARRIAGES. I. Now when Ezra had prayed** — As this prayer was uttered in public, while there was a general concourse of the people at the time of the evening sacrifice, and as it was accompanied with all the demonstrations of poignant sorrow and anguish, it is not surprising that the spectacle of a man so respected, a priest so holy, a governor so dignified as Ezra, appearing distressed and filled with fear at the sad state of things, should produce a deep sensation; and the report of his passionate grief and expressions in the court of the temple having rapidly spread through the city, a great multitude flocked to the spot. 2-4. **Shechaniah . . . answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed** — This was one of the leading men, who was not himself a delinquent in the matter, for his name does not occur in the following list. He spoke in the general name of the people, and his conduct evinced a tender conscience as well as no small fortitude in making such a proposal; for as his father and five paternal uncles (*v.* 26) were involved in the guilt of unlawful marriages, he showed, by the measure he recommended, that he deemed it better to obey God than to please his nearest relatives. **yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing** — This hope, however, depended on timely measures of reformation, and, therefore, instead of surrendering themselves to despair or despondency, he counseled them to amend their error without delay, relying on God's mercy for the past. Though the proposal may seem harsh and cruel, yet in the peculiar circumstances of the Jews, it was just as well as necessary; and he urged the duty of seeing it executed on Ezra, as the only person competent to carry it into effect, being possessed of skill and address for so delicate and difficult a work, and invested by God, and under him, by the Persian king (*ch.* 7. 23-28), with the requisite authority to enforce it. 5-8. **Then Ezra . . . went into the chamber of Johanan** — At a private council of the princes and elders held there, under the presidency of Ezra, it was resolved to enter into a general covenant to put away their foreign wives and children — that a proclamation should be made for all who had returned from Babylon to repair within three days to Jerusalem, under pain of excommunication and confiscation of their property. 9-11. **Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin** — The returned captives belonged chiefly to these tribes; but other Israelites are also included under these names, as they all were then occupying the territory formerly assigned to those two tribes. **it was the ninth month** — *i. e.*, between the end of December and the beginning of January, which is the coldest and most rainy season of the year in Palestine. **all the people sat in the street** — *i. e.*, the court. 10. **Ezra, the priest, stood up, and said** — Having fully represented the enormity of their sin, and urged them to dissolve their unlawful connections, he was gratified by receiving a prompt acknowledgment of the justice of his reproof, and a promise of compliance with his recommendation. But as the weather was ungenial, and the defaulters were too

numerous to be passed in review at one time, it was resolved that a commission should be appointed to examine into the whole matter. These commissioners, assisted by the judges and elders of the respective cities, made a minute investigation into every case, and after three months' labour, completely removed all traces of the abuse. Doubtless an adequate provision was made for the repudiated wives and children, according to the means and circumstances of the husbands.

**18-44. THOSE THAT HAD TAKEN STRANGE WIVES.** 18. **among the sons of the priests** — from the names of so many men of rank appearing in the following list, some idea may be formed of the great and complicated difficulties attending the reformatory work. **they gave their hands** — *i. e.*, came under a solemn engagement, which was usually ratified by pledging the right hand (Proverbs, 6. 1; Ezekiel, 17. 18). The delinquents of the priestly order bound themselves to do like the common Israelites (*v.* 25), and sought to expiate their sin by sacrificing a ram as a trespass offering.

# THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

## CHAPTER I.

**1-3. NEHEMIAH, UNDERSTANDING BY HANANI THE AFFLICTED STATE OF JERUSALEM, MOURNS, FASTS AND PRAYS.** 1. **Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah**—This eminently pious and patriotic Jew is to be carefully distinguished from two other persons of the same name—one of whom is mentioned as helping to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (ch. 3. 16), and the other is noticed in the list of those who accompanied Zerubbabel in the first detachment of returning exiles (Ezra, 2. 2; ch. 7. 7). Though little is known of his genealogy, it is highly probable that he was a descendant of the tribe of Judah and royal family of David. **in the month Chisleu**—answering to the close of November and the larger part of December. **Shushan the palace**—The capital of ancient Susiana, east of the Tigris, a province of Persia. From the time of Cyrus, it was the favourite winter residence of the Persian kings. 2. **Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah**—Hanani is called (ch. 7. 2) his brother. But as that term was used loosely by Jews as well as other Orientals, it is probable that no more is meant than that he was of the same family. According to Josephus, Nehemiah, while walking around the palace walls, overheard some persons conversing in the Hebrew language, and having ascertained that they had lately returned from Judea, was informed by them, in answer to his eager inquiries, of the unfinished and desolate condition of Jerusalem, as well as the defenseless state of the returned exiles. The commissions previously given to Zerubbabel and Ezra, extending only to the repair of the temple and of private dwellings,—the walls and gates of the city had been allowed to remain a mass of shattered ruins, as they had been laid by the Chaldean siege.

**4-II. HIS PRAYER.** 4. **when I heard these words . . . sat down . . . and mourned . . . and fasted, and prayed**—The recital deeply affected the patriotic feelings of this good man, and no comfort could he find but in earnest and protracted prayer, that God would favour the purpose which he seems to have secretly formed of asking the royal permission to go to Jerusalem. **II. I was the king's cup-bearer**—This officer, in the ancient Oriental courts, was always a person of rank and importance; and, from the confidential nature of his duties, and his frequent access to the royal presence, possessed of great influence.

## CHAPTER II.

**1-20. ARTAXERXES, UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSE OF NEHEMIAH'S SADNESS, SENDS HIM WITH LETTERS AND A COMMISSION TO BUILD AGAIN THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.** 1. **it came to pass in the month Nisan**—This was nearly four months after he had learned the deso-

late and ruinous state of Jerusalem (ch. i. 1). The reasons of so long a delay cannot be ascertained. **I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king**—Xenophon has particularly remarked the polished and graceful manner in which the cup-bearers of the Median, and consequently the Persian monarchs, performed their duty of presenting the wine to their royal master. Having washed the cup in the king's presence, and poured into their left hand a little of the wine, which they drank off in his presence, they then handed the cup to him, not grasped, but lightly held with the tips of their thumb and fingers. This description has received some curious illustrations from the monuments of Assyria and Persia, on which the cup-bearers are frequently represented in the act of handing wine to the king. 2. **the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad**—It was deemed highly unbecoming to appear in the royal presence with any weeds or signs of sorrow (Esther, 4. 2); and hence it was no wonder that the king was struck with the dejected air of his cup-bearer, while that attendant, on his part, felt his agitation increased by his deep anxiety about the issue of the conversation so abruptly begun. But the piety and intense earnestness of the man immediately restored him to calm self-possession, and enabled him to communicate, first, the cause of his sadness, and, next, the patriotic wish of his heart, to be the honoured instrument of reviving the ancient glory of the city of his fathers. 6-9. **the queen also sitting by him**—As the Persian monarchs did not admit their wives to be present at their state festivals, this must have been a private occasion. The queen referred to was probably Esther, whose presence would tend greatly to embolden Nehemiah in stating his request; and through her influence, powerfully exerted it may be supposed, also by her sympathy with the patriotic design, his petition was granted, to go as deputy-governor of Judea, accompanied by a military guard, and invested with full powers to obtain materials for the building in Jerusalem, as well as to get all requisite aid in promoting his enterprise. 6. **I set him a time**—Considering the great dispatch made in raising the walls, it is probable that this leave of absence was limited at first to a year or six months, after which he returned to his duties in Shushan. The circumstance of fixing a set time for his return, as well as intrusting so important a work as the refortification of Jerusalem to his care, proves the high favour and confidence Nehemiah enjoyed at the Persian court, and the great estimation in which his services were held. At a later period he received a new commission for the better settlement of the affairs of Judea, and remained governor of that province for twelve years (ch. 5. 14). 7. **letters be given me to the governors beyond the river**—The Persian empire at this time was of vast extent, reaching from the Indus to the Mediterranean, and the Euphrates was considered as naturally dividing it into two parts, eastern and western (see Ezra, 5. 3, 4). 8. **according to the good hand of my God upon me**—The piety of Nehemiah appears in every circumstance. The conception of his patriotic design—the favourable disposition of the king—and the success of the undertaking, are all ascribed to God. 9, 10. **Sanballat the Horonite**—Horonaim being a town in

Moab, this person, it is probable, was a Moabite. **Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite** — The term used indicates him to have been a freed slave, elevated to some official dignity. These were district magistrates under the government of the satrap of Syria; and they seem to have been leaders of the Samaritan faction. 11, 12. **So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days** — Deeply affected with the desolations of Jerusalem, and uncertain what course to follow, he remained three days before informing any one of the object of his mission, and at the end of the third day, accompanied with a few attendants, he made, under covert of night, a secret survey of the walls and gates. 13-15. **I went out by night by the gate of the valley** — *i. e.*, the Jaffa gate, near the tower of Hippicus. **even before the dragon well** — *i. e.*, fountain on the opposite side of the valley. **and to the dung port** — The gate on the east of the city, through which there ran a common sewer to the brook Kedron and the valley of Hinnom. 14. **Then** — *i. e.*, after having passed through the gate of the Essenes. **I went on to the gate of the fountain** — *i. e.*, Siloah, from which turning round the fount of Ophel. **to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass** — *i. e.*, by the sides of this pool — Solomon's — there being water in the pool, and too much rubbish about it to permit the passage of the beast. 15. **Then I went up . . . by the brook** — *i. e.*, Kedron. **and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned** — The gate leading to the valley of Jehoshaphat, east of the city. He went out by this gate, and having made the circuit of the city, went in by it again [BARCLAY'S CITY OF THE GREAT KING]. 16-18. **the rulers knew not** — The following day, having assembled the elders, Nehemiah produced his commission, and exhorted them to assist in the work. The sight of his credentials, and the animating strain of his address and example, so revived their drooping spirits, that they resolved immediately to commence the building, which they did, despite of the bitter taunts and scoffing ridicule of some influential men.

### CHAPTER III.

**1-32. THE NAMES AND ORDER OF THEM THAT BUILDED THE WALL OF JERUSALEM.** 1. **Then Eliashib the high priest** — The grandson of Jeshua, and the first high priest after the return from Babylon. **rose up, with his brethren the priests** — *i. e.*, set an example by commencing the work — their labours being confined to the sacred localities. **they builded the sheep gate** — close to the temple. Its name arose either from the sheep-market, or from the pool of Bethesda, where the sheep were washed, which was there (John, 5. 2); and thence they were taken to the temple for sacrifice. **they sanctified it, and set up the doors** — Being the common entrance into the temple, and the first part of the building repaired, it is probable that some religious ceremonies were observed in gratitude for its completion. "It was the first-fruits, and, therefore, in the sanctification of it, the whole lump and building was sanctified." [POOLE.] **the tower of Meah** — This

word is improperly considered, in our version, as the name of a tower; it is the *Hebrew* word for "a hundred," so that the meaning is, they not only rebuilt the sheep gate, but also a hundred cubits of the wall, which extended as far as the town of Hananeel. 2. **next unto him builded the men of Jericho, &c.**—The wall was divided into portions, one of which was assigned respectively to each of the great families which had returned from the captivity, and this distribution, by which the building was carried on in all parts simultaneously with great energy, was eminently favourable to dispatch. "The villages where the restorers resided being mostly mentioned, it will be seen, that this circumstance affords a general indication of the part of the wall upon which they laboured—such places being on that side of the city nearest their place of abode. The only apparent exception being, perhaps, where they repaired more than their piece—having completed their first undertaking (if they worked any more) there being no more work to be done on the side next their residence, or having arrived after the repairs on that part of the city nearest them under operation were completed, they would go wherever their services would be required." [BARCLAY'S CITY OF THE GREAT KING.] 8. **they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall**—or double wall, extending from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate 400 cubits in length, formerly broken down by Joash, king of Israel, but afterward rebuilt by Uzziah, who made it so strong, that the Chaldeans, finding it difficult to demolish it, had left it standing. 12. **Shallum . . . he and his daughters**—who were either heiresses or rich widows, who undertook to defray the expenses of a part of the wall next them. 13. **the inhabitants of Zanoah**—There were two towns so called in the territory of Judah (Joshua, 15. 34, 56). 14. **Beth-hacerem**—a city of Judah, supposed to be now occupied by Bethulia, on a hill of the same name, which is sometimes called also the Mountain of the Franks, between Jerusalem and Tekoa. 16. **the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty**—*i. e.*, along the precipitous cliffs of Zion. [BARCLAY.] 19. **at the turning of the wall**—*i. e.*, the wall across the Tyropæon, being a continuation of the first wall, connecting Mount Zion with the temple wall. [BARCLAY.] 25. **the tower which lieth out from the king's high house**—*i. e.*, watch-tower by the royal palace, in the fortification wall of the palace. [BARCLAY.] 26. **the Nethinims**—Not only the priests and the Levites, but the meanest persons that belonged to the house of God, contributed to the work. The names of those who repaired the walls of Jerusalem are commemorated, because it was a work of piety and patriotism to repair the holy city. It was an instance of religion and courage to defend the true worshippers of God, that they might serve him in quietness and safety, and, in the midst of so many enemies, go on with this work, piously confiding in the power of God to support them. [BISHOP PATRICK.]

## CHAPTER IV.

**1-6. WHILE THE ENEMIES SCOFF, NEHEMIAH PRAYS TO GOD AND CONTINUES THE WORK.** 1. **when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall he was wroth**—The Samaritan faction showed their bitter animosity to the Jews on discovering the systematic design of refortifying Jerusalem. Their opposition was confined, at first, to scoffs and insults—in heaping which the governors made themselves conspicuous, and circulated all sorts of disparaging reflections that might increase the feelings of hatred and contempt for them in their own party. The weakness of the Jews in respect of wealth and numbers—the absurdity of their purpose apparently to reconstruct the walls and celebrate the Feast of Dedication in one day—the idea of raising the walls on their old foundations, as well as using the charred and mouldering debris of the ruins as the materials of the restored buildings—and the hope of such a parapet as they could raise being capable of serving as a fortress of defense; these all afforded fertile subjects of hostile ridicule. 3. **if a fox go up**—the foxes were mentioned from their having been known, in great numbers, to infest the ruined and desolate places in the mount and city of Zion (Lamentations, 5. 18). 4, 5. **Hear, O our God, for we are despised**—The imprecations invoked here may seem harsh, cruel and vindictive. But it must be remembered that Nehemiah and his friends regarded those Samaritan leaders as enemies to the cause of God and His people, and, therefore, as deserving to be visited with heavy judgments. The prayer, therefore, is to be considered as emanating from hearts in which neither hatred, revenge, nor any inferior passion, but a pious and patriotic zeal for the glory of God and the success of His cause, held the ascendant sway. 6. **all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof**—The whole circuit of the wall had been distributed in sections to various companies of the people, and was completed to the half of the intended height.

**7-23. HE SETS A WATCH.** 7. **But . . . when Sanballat . . . heard that the walls . . . were made up, and . . . the breaches . . . stopped**—The rapid progress of the fortifications, despite of all their predictions to the contrary, goaded the Samaritans to frenzy, and they, dreading danger from the growing greatness of the Jews, formed a conspiracy to surprise them, demolish their works, and disperse or intimidate the builders. The plot being discovered, Nehemiah adopted the most energetic measures for insuring the common safety, as well as the uninterrupted building of the walls. Hitherto the governor, for the sake of dispatch, had set all his attendants and guards on the work—now half of them were withdrawn to be constantly in arms. The workmen laboured with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other; and as, in so large a circuit, they were far removed from each other, Nehemiah, who was night and day on the spot, and, by his pious exhortations an example, animated the minds of his people, kept a trumpeter by his side, so that, on any intelligence of a surprise being brought to him, an alarm might be immediately sounded and assistance



rendered to the most distant detachment of their brethren. By these vigilant precautions, the counsels of the enemy were defeated, and the work was carried on apace. God, when he has important public work to do, never fails to raise up instruments for accomplishing it, and in the person of Nehemiah, who, to great natural acuteness and energy, added fervent piety and heroic devotion, He provided a leader whose high qualities fitted him for the demands of the crisis. Nehemiah's vigilance anticipated every difficulty—his prudent measures defeated every obstruction, and with astonishing rapidity this Jerusalem was made again "a city fortified."

## CHAPTER V.

**1-5. THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN OF THEIR DEBT, MORTGAGE AND BONDAGE.** **1. there was a great cry of the people . . . against their brethren**—Such a crisis in the condition of the Jews in Jerusalem—fatigued with hard labour and harassed by the machinations of restless enemies, the majority of them poor, and the bright visions which hope had painted of pure happiness on their return to the land of their fathers being unrealized—must have been very trying to their faith and patience. But, in addition to these vexatious oppressions, many began to sink under a new and more grievous evil. The poor made loud complaints against the rich for taking advantage of their necessities and grinding them by usurious exactions. Numbers of them had, in consequence of these oppressions, been driven to such extremities that they had to mortgage their lands and houses to enable them to pay the taxes to the Persian government, and ultimately, even sell their children for slaves to procure the means of subsistence. The condition of the poorer inhabitants was, indeed, deplorable; for, besides the deficient harvests caused by the great rains (Ezra, 10. 9; also Haggai, 1. 6-11), a dearth was now threatened by the enemy keeping such a multitude pent up in the city and preventing the country people bringing in provisions.

**6-19. THE USURERS REBUKED.** **6. I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words**—When such disorders came to the knowledge of the governor, his honest indignation was roused against the perpetrators of the evil and, having summoned a public assembly, he denounced their conduct in terms of just severity—contrasted it with his own in redeeming with his money some of the Jewish exiles who, through debt or otherwise, had lost their personal liberty in Babylon—urged the rich creditors not only to abandon their illegal and oppressive system of usury, but to restore the fields and vineyards of the poor, so that a remedy might be put to an evil, the introduction of which had led to much actual disorder and the continuance of which would, inevitably, prove ruinous to the newly restored colony, by violating the fundamental principles of the Hebrew constitution. The remonstrance was effectual. The conscience of the usurious oppressors could not resist the touching and powerful appeal, and, with mingled emotions of shame, contrition and fear they,

with one voice, expressed their readiness to comply with the governor's recommendation. The proceedings were closed by the parties binding themselves by a solemn oath, administered by the priests, that they would redeem their pledge, as well as by the governor invoking, by the solemn and significant gesture of shaking a corner of his garment, a malediction on those who should violate it. The historian has taken care to record that the people did according to this promise. 14. **Moreover from the time that I was appointed . . . I, and my brethren, have not eaten the bread of the governor** — We have a remarkable proof both of the opulence and the disinterestedness of Nehemiah. As he declined, on conscientious grounds, to accept the lawful emoluments attached to his government, and yet maintained a style of princely hospitality, for twelve years, out of his own resources, it is evident that his office of cup-bearer, at the court of Shushan, must have been very lucrative. 15. **the former governors . . . had taken . . . bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver** — The income of Eastern governors is partly paid in produce, partly in money. "Bread" means all sorts of provisions. The forty shekels of silver per day would amount to a yearly salary of £1,800 sterling. 17. **Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews** — In the East it has been always customary to calculate the expense of a king's or grandee's establishment, not by the amount of money disbursed, but by the quantity of provisions consumed (see 1 Kings, 4. 22 ; 18. 19 ; Ecclesiastes, 5. 11).

## CHAPTER VI.

1-19. SANBALLAT PRACTICES AGAINST NEHEMIAH BY INSIDUOUS ATTEMPTS. 2. **Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me** — The Samaritan leaders, satisfied that they could not overcome Nehemiah by open arms, resolved to gain advantage over him by deceit and stratagem. With this view, under pretext of terminating their differences in an amicable manner, they invited him to a conference. The place of rendezvous was fixed "in *some one* of the villages in the plain of Ono." "In the villages," is *Heb.*, "in Cephirim," or Cephirah, the name of a town in the territory of Benjamin (Joshua, 9. 17 ; 18. 26). Nehemiah, however, apprehensive of some intended mischief, prudently declined the invitation, and, though it was repeated four times, his uniform answer was, that his presence could not be dispensed with from the important work in which he was engaged. This was one, though not the only, reason. The principal ground of his refusal was, that his seizure or death at their hands would certainly put a stop to the further progress of the fortifications. 5-9. **Then sent Sanballat his servant . . . the fifth time with an open letter in his hand** In Western Asia, letters, after being rolled up like a map, are flattened to the breadth of an inch, and instead of being sealed are pasted at the ends. In Eastern Asia, the Persians make up their letters in the form of a roll about six inches long, and a bit of paper is fastened round it with gum, and sealed with an impression of ink, which resembles

our printers' ink, but is not so thick. Letters were, and are still, sent to persons of distinction in a bag or purse, and even to equals they are inclosed—the tie being made with a coloured ribbon; but to inferiors, or to persons who are to be treated contemptuously, the letters were sent open, *i. e.*, not inclosed in a bag. Nehemiah, accustomed to the punctilious ceremonial of the Persian court, would at once notice the want of the usual formality, and know that it was from designed disrespect. The strain of the letter was equally insolent. It was to this effect—that the fortifications with which he was so busy were intended to strengthen his position in the view of a meditated revolt—that he had engaged prophets to incite the people to enter into his design, and support his claim to be their native king—and that, to stop the circulation of such reports, which would soon reach the court, he was earnestly besought to come to the wished-for conference. Nehemiah, strong in the consciousness of his own integrity, and penetrating the purpose of this shallow artifice, replied, that there were no rumors of the kind described—that the idea of a revolt, and the stimulating addresses of hired demagogues were stories of the writers' own invention, and that he declined now, as formerly, to leave his work. 10-14. **Afterward I came into the house of She-maiah, &c.**—This man was the son of a priest, who was an intimate and confidential friend of Nehemiah. The young man claimed to be endowed with the gift of prophecy. Having been secretly bribed by Sanballat, he, in his pretended capacity of prophet, told Nehemiah that his enemies were that night to make an attempt upon his life and advised him, at the same time, to consult his safety by concealing himself in the sanctuary, a crypt which, from its sanctity, was strong and secure. But the noble-minded governor determined at all hazards to remain at his post, and not bring discredit on the cause of God and religion by his unworthy cowardice in leaving the temple and city unprotected. This plot, together with a secret collusion between the enemy and the nobles at Judah who were favourably disposed toward the bad Samaritan in consequence of his Jewish connections (*v.* 18), the undaunted courage and vigilance of Nehemiah were enabled, with the blessing of God, to defeat, and the erection of the walls thus built in troublous times (Daniel, 9. 25), was happily completed (*v.* 15), in the brief space of fifty-two days. So rapid execution, even supposing some parts of the old wall standing, cannot be sufficiently accounted for, except by the consideration that the builders laboured with the ardour of religious zeal, as men employed in the work of God.

## CHAPTER VII.

**1-4. NEHEMIAH COMMITS THE CHARGE OF JERUSALEM TO HANANI AND HANANIAH.** 2. **I gave my brother Hanani . . . charge over Jerusalem**—If, as is commonly supposed, Nehemiah was now contemplating a return to Shushan according to his promise, it was natural that he should wish to intrust the custody of Jeru-

salem and the management of its civic affairs to men on whose ability, experience and fidelity he could confide. Hanani, a near relative (ch. I. 2), was one, and with him was associated, as colleague, Hananiah, "the ruler of the palace," *i. e.*, the marshal or chamberlain of the viceregal court, which Nehemiah had maintained in Jerusalem. The high religious principle, as well as the patriotic spirit of those two men, recommended them as pre-eminently qualified for being invested with an official trust of such peculiar importance. **he feared God above many**—The piety of Hananiah is especially mentioned as the ground of his eminent fidelity in the discharge of all his duties, and, consequently, the reason of the confidence which Nehemiah reposed in him, for he was fully persuaded that Hananiah's fear of God would preserve him from those temptations to treachery and unfaithfulness which he was likely to encounter on the governor's departure from Jerusalem. 3. **Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot, &c.**—In the East it is customary to open the gates of a city at sunrise, and to bar them at sunset—a rule which is very rarely, and not except to persons of authority, infringed. Nehemiah recommended that the gates of Jerusalem should not be so early opened; a precaution necessary at a time when the enemy were practicing all sorts of dangerous stratagems, to insure that the inhabitants were all astir, and enjoyed the benefit of clear, broad daylight for observing the suspicious movements of any enemy. The propriety and regularly barring the gates at sunset was, in this instance, accompanied with the appointment of a number of the people to act as sentinels, each mounting guard in front of his own house. 4. **Now the city was large and great**—The walls being evidently built on the old foundations, the city covered a large extent of surface, as all Oriental towns do, the houses standing apart with gardens and orchards intervening. This extent, in the then state of Jerusalem, was the more observable as the population was comparatively small, and the habitations of the most rude and simple construction—mere wooden sheds or coverings of loose unmortared stones.

**5-38. GENEALOGY OF THOSE WHO CAME AT THE FIRST OUT OF BABYLON.** 5. **my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, &c.**—The arrangement about to be described, though dictated by mere common prudence, is, in accordance with the pious feeling of Nehemiah, ascribed not to his own prudence or reflection, but to the grace of God prompting and directing him. He resolved to prepare a register of the returned exiles, containing an exact record of the family and ancestral abode of every individual, and while thus directing his attention, discovered a register of the first detachment who had come under the care of Zerubbabel. It is transcribed in the following verses, and differs in some few particulars from that given in Ezra, 2; but the discrepancy is sufficiently accounted for from the different circumstances in which the two registers were taken; that of Ezra having been made up at Babylon, while that of Nehemiah was drawn out in Judea, after the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt. The lapse of so many years might well be expected to make a difference

appear in the catalogue, through death or other causes; in particular, one person being, according to Jewish custom, called by different names. Thus Hariph (*v.* 24) is the same as Jorah (Ezra, 2. 18), Sia (*v.* 47) the same as Siaha (Ezra, 2. 44), &c. Beside other purposes to which this genealogy of the nobles, rulers and people was subservient, one leading object contemplated by it was to ascertain with accuracy the parties to whom the duty legally belonged of ministering at the altar, and conducting the various services of the temple; and for guiding to exact information in this important point of inquiry, the possession of the old register of Zerubbabel was invaluable.

**39-73. OF THE PRIESTS.** 39. **The priests**—It appears that only four of the courses of the priests returned from the captivity, and that the course of Abia (Luke, 1. 5) is not on the list. But it must be noticed that these four courses were afterward divided into twenty-four, which retained the names of the original courses which David appointed. 70. **some of the chief of the fathers, &c.** With verse 69 the register ends, and the thread of Nehemiah's history is resumed. He was the Tirshatha or governor, and the liberality displayed by him and some of the leading men for the suitable equipment of the ministers of religion, forms the subject of the remaining portion of the chapter. Their donations consisted principally in garments. This would appear a singular description of gifts to be made by any one among us; but, in the East, a present of garments, or of any article of use, is conformable to the prevailing sentiments and customs of society. **drams of gold**—*i. e.*, darics. A daric was a gold coin of ancient Persia, worth £1 5s. 71. **pound of silver**—*i. e.*, *mina* (sixty shekels, or £9). 73. **So... all Israel, dwelt in their cities**—The utility of these genealogical registers was thus found in guiding to a knowledge of the cities and localities in each tribe to which every family anciently belonged.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### 1-8. RELIGIOUS MANNER OF READING AND HEARING THE LAW.

1. **all the people gathered themselves together as one man**—The occasion was the celebration of the feast of the seventh month (*ch.* 7. 73). The beginning of every month was ushered in as a sacred festival; but this, the commencement of the seventh month, was kept with distinguished honour as "the Feast of Trumpets," which extended over two days. It was the first day of the seventh ecclesiastical year, and the new year's day of the civil year, on which account it was held as "a great day." The place where the general concourse of people was held was "at the water-gate," on the south rampart. Through that gate the Nethinims or Gibeonites brought water into the temple, and there was a spacious area in front of it. **they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses**—He had come to Jerusalem twelve or thirteen years previous to Nehemiah; and either remained there, or had returned to Babylon in obedience to the royal order, and for the discharge of important duties. He had returned along with Nehe-

miah, but in a subordinate capacity. From the time of Nehemiah's appointment to the dignity of Tirshatha, Ezra had retired into private life; and, although cordially and zealously co-operating with the former patriot in his important measures of reform, the pious priest had devoted his time and attention principally toward producing a complete edition of the canonical Scriptures. The public reading of the Scriptures was required by the law to be made every seventh year, but, during the long period of the captivity, this excellent practice, with many others, had fallen into neglect, till revived on this occasion; and it indicates a greatly improved tone of religious feeling, that there was a strong and general desire among the returned exiles in Jerusalem to hear the word of God read to them. 4. **Ezra . . . stood upon a pulpit of wood** — Not made in the form known to us, but only a raised scaffold or platform, broad enough to allow fourteen persons to stand with ease upon it. Ezra's duty was very laborious, as he continued reading aloud from morning until midday, but his labour was lightened by the aid of the other priests present. Their presence was of use partly to show their cordial agreement with Ezra's declaration of Divine truth; and partly to take their share with him in the important duty of publicly reading and expounding the Scripture. 5. **when he opened it, all the people stood up** — This attitude they assumed either from respect to God's word, or, rather, because the reading was prefaced by a solemn prayer, which was concluded by a general expression of Amen, Amen. 7, 8. **caused the people to understand the law . . . gave the sense** — Commentators are divided in opinion as to the import of this statement, some thinking that Ezra read the law in pure Hebrew, while the Levites, who assisted him, translated it sentence by sentence into Chaldee, the vernacular dialect, which the exiles spoke in Babylon; while others maintain that the duty of these Levites consisted in explaining to the people, many of whom had become very ignorant, what Ezra had read.

9-15. THE PEOPLE COMFORTED. 9. **This day is holy unto the Lord . . . mourn not, nor weep** — A deep sense of their national sins, impressively brought to their remembrance by the reading of the law and its denunciations, affected the hearts of the people with penitential sorrow; but, notwithstanding the painful remembrances of their national sins which the reading of the law awakened, the people were exhorted to cherish the feelings of joy and thankfulness associated with a sacred festival (see Leviticus, 23. 23-25), and, by sending portions of it to their poorer brethren (Deuteronomy, 16. 11, 14; Esther, 9. 19) enable them to participate in the public rejoicings.

16-18. THEY KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. 16. **the people went forth, and brought . . . and made themselves booths, &c.** — (see Leviticus, 23. 34-44; Deuteronomy, 16. 13-17). 17. **since the days of Joshua . . . had not the children of Israel done so** — This national feast had not been neglected for so protracted a period; for, besides that, it is impossible that such a flagrant disregard of the law could have been tolerated by Samuel, David and other pious rulers, its observance is sufficiently indicated (1 Kings, 8. 2, 65; 2 Chronicles, 7. 9), and expressly recorded (Ezra, 3. 4). But

the meaning is, that the popular feeling has never been raised to such a height of enthusiastic joy since the time of their entrance into Canaan, as now on their return after a long and painful captivity. 18. **Also day by day . . . he read in the book of the law of God** — This was more than was enjoined (Deuteronomy, 31. 10-12), and arose from the exuberant zeal of the time. **on the eighth day was a solemn assembly** — This was the last and great day of the feast (Numbers, 30. 35). In later times, other ceremonies which increased the rejoicings were added (John, 7. 37).

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-3. A SOLEMN FEAST, AND REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE.** 1. **Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month** — *i. e.*, on the second day after the close of the feast of Tabernacles, which commenced on the fourteenth and terminated on the twenty-second (Leviticus, 23). The day immediately after that feast, the twenty-third, had been occupied in separating the delinquents from their unlawful wives, as well, perhaps, as in taking steps for keeping aloof in future from unnecessary intercourse with the heathen around them. For although this necessary measure of reformation had been begun formerly by Ezra (Ezra, 10), and satisfactorily accomplished at that time, so far as he had information of the existing abuses, or possessed the power of correcting them, yet it appears that this reformatory work of Ezra had been only partial and imperfect; many cases of delinquency had escaped, or new defaulters had appeared who had contracted those forbidden alliances; and there was an urgent necessity for Nehemiah again to take vigorous measures for the removal of a social evil which threatened the most disastrous consequences to the character and prosperity of the chosen people. A solemn fast was now observed for the expression of those penitential and sorrowful feelings which the reading of the law had produced, but which had been suppressed during the celebration of the feast; and the sincerity of their repentance was evinced by the decisive steps taken for the correction of existing abuses in the matter of marriage. 2. **confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers** — Not only did they read in their recent sufferings a punishment of the national apostacy and guilt; but they had made themselves partakers of their fathers' sins by following the same evil ways. 3. **they . . . read in the book of the law** — Their extraordinary zeal led them to continue this as before. **one fourth part of the day** — *i. e.*, for three hours, twelve hours being the acknowledged length of the Jewish day (John, 11. 9), so that this solemn diet of worship, which probably commenced at the morning sacrifice, was continued for six hours, *i. e.*, till the time of the evening sacrifice. The worship which they gave to the Lord their God, at this season of solemn, national humiliation, consisted in acknowledging and adoring His great mercy in the forgiveness of their great and multiplied offenses in delivering them from the merited judgments which they had already experienced, or which they had reason to appre-

hend, in continuing among them the light and blessings of His word and worship, and in supplicating the extension of His grace and protection.

**4-35. THE LEVITES CONFESS GOD'S MANIFOLD GOODNESS AND THEIR OWN WICKEDNESS.** 4. **Then stood up upon the stairs** — The scaffolds or pulpits, whence the Levites usually addressed the people. There were probably several placed at convenient distances, to prevent confusion, and the voice of one drowning those of the others. **cried with a loud voice unto the Lord** — Such an exertion, of course, was indispensably necessary, in order that the speakers might be heard by a vast multitude congregated in the open air. But these speakers were then engaged in expressing their deep sense of sin, as well as fervently imploring the forgiving mercy of God, and “crying with a loud voice” was a natural accompaniment of this extraordinary prayer-meeting, as violent gestures and vehement tones are always the way in which the Jews, and other people in the East, have been accustomed to give utterance to deep and earnest feelings. 5. **then the Levites . . . said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God.** — If this prayer was uttered by all these Levites in common, it must have been prepared and adopted beforehand; perhaps, by Ezra; but it may only embody the substance of the confession and thanksgiving. 6. **Thou, even thou, art Lord alone, &c.** — In this solemn and impressive prayer, in which they made public confession of their sins, and deprecated the judgments due to the transgressions of their fathers, they begin with a profound adoration of God, whose supreme majesty and omnipotence is acknowledged in the creation, preservation and government of all, and then they proceed to enumerate his mercies and distinguished favours to them as a nation, from the period of the call of their great ancestor, and the gracious promise intimated to him in the divinely bestowed name of Abraham, a promise which implied that he was to be the Father of the faithful, the ancestor of the Messiah, and the honoured individual in whose seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. Tracing in full and minute detail the signal instances of divine interposition for their deliverance and their interest — in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage — their miraculous passage through the Red Sea — the promulgation of His law — the forbearance and long-suffering shown them amid their frequent rebellions — the signal triumphs given them over their enemies — their happy settlement in the promised land — and all the extraordinary blessings, both in the form of temporal prosperity and of religious privilege, with which his paternal goodness had favoured them above all other people; they charge themselves with making a miserable requital — confess their numerous and determined acts of disobedience — read, in the loss of their national independence and their long captivity, the severe punishment of their sins — acknowledge that, in all the heavy and continued judgments upon their nation, God had done right, but they had done wickedly, and, in throwing themselves on His mercy, express their purpose of entering into a rational covenant, by which they pledge themselves to dutiful obedience in future. 22. **Moreover, thou gavest them kingdoms and nations** — *i. e.*, put



them in possession of a rich country, of an extensive territory, which had been once occupied by a variety of princes and people. **and didst divide them into corners**—*i. e.*, into tribes. The propriety of the expression arose from the various districts touching at points or angles on each other. **the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon**—Heshbon being the capital city, the passage should run thus:—the land of Sihon or the land of the king of Heshbon. 32. **Now, therefore, our God . . . who keepest covenant and mercy**—God's fidelity to His covenant is prominently acknowledged, and well it might, for their whole national history bore testimony to it. But as this could afford them little ground of comfort or of hope, while they were so painfully conscious of having violated it, they were driven to seek refuge in the riches of divine grace; and hence the peculiar style of invocation here adopted. "Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who *keepest covenant and mercy.*" 36. **Behold, we are servants this day**—Notwithstanding their happy restoration to their native land, they were still tributaries of a foreign prince whose officers ruled them, and were not, like their fathers, free tenants of the land which God gave them. 37. **it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins**—Our agricultural labours have been resumed in the land—we plough, and sow, and till, and thou blesseth the work of our hands with a plentiful return; but this increase is not for ourselves, as once it was, but for our foreign masters, to whom we have to pay large and oppressive tribute. **they have dominion over our bodies**—Their persons were liable to be pressed, at the mandate of their Assyrian conqueror, into the service of his empire, either in war or in public works. **And our beasts are taken to do their pleasure.** 38. **we make a sure covenant, and write**—*i. e.*, subscribe or sign it. This written document would exercise a wholesome influence in restraining their backslidings or in animating them to duty, by being a witness against them if in future they were unfaithful to their engagements.

## CHAPTER X.

1-27. THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO SEALED THE COVENANT. 1. **Nehemiah the Tirshatha**—His name was placed first in the roll on account of his high official rank, as deputy of the Persian monarch. All classes were included in the subscription list; but the people were represented by their elders (*v. 14*), as it would have been impossible for every one in the country to have been admitted to the sealing.

28. THE REST OF THE PEOPLE BOUND THEMSELVES TO OBSERVE IT. Those who were not present at the sealing ratified the covenant by giving their assent, either in words or by lifting up their hands, and bound themselves, by a solemn oath, to walk in God's law, imprecating a curse upon themselves in the event of their violating it.

**29-39. POINTS OF THE COVENANT.** 29. **to observe and do all the commandments, &c.**—This national covenant, besides containing a solemn pledge of obedience to the divine law generally, specified their engagement to some particular duties, which the character and exigency of the times stamped with great urgency and importance, and which may be summed up under the following heads:—that they abstain from contracting matrimonial alliances with the heathen; that they would rigidly observe the Sabbath; that they would let the land enjoy rest and remit debts every seventh year; that they would contribute to the maintenance of the temple service, the necessary expenses of which had formerly been defrayed out of the treasury of the temple (1 Chronicles, 26. 20), and when it was drained, given out from the king's privy purse (2 Chronicles, 31. 3); and that they would make an orderly payment of the priest's dues. A minute and particular enumeration of the first-fruits was made, that all might be made fully aware of their obligations, and that none might excuse themselves on pretext of ignorance from withholding taxes which the poverty of many, and the irreligion of others, had made them exceedingly prone to evade. 32. **the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God**—The law required every individual above twenty years of age to pay half a shekel to the sanctuary. But in consequence of the general poverty of the people, occasioned by war and captivity, this tribute was reduced to a third part of a shekel. 34. **we cast the lots . . . for the wood offering**—The carrying of the wood had formerly been the work of the Nethinims. But few of them having returned, the duty was assigned as stated in the text. The practice afterward rose into great importance, and Josephus speaks (WARS, ii. 17, sec. 6), of the Xylophoria, or certain stated and solemn times at which the people brought up wood to the temple. 38. **The priest, the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes**—This was a prudential arrangement. The presence of a dignified priest would insure the peaceful delivery of the tithes, at least his superintendence and influence would tend to prevent the commission of any wrong in the transaction, by the people deceiving the Levites, or the Levites defrauding the priests. **the tithe of the tithes**—*i. e.*, the Levites, having received a tenth of all land produce, were required to give a tenth of this to the priests. The Levites were charged with the additional obligation to carry the tithes, when received, and deposit them in the temple stores, for the use of the priests. 39. **we will not forsake the house of our God**—This solemn pledge was repeated at the close of the covenant as an expression of the intense zeal by which the people at this time were animated for the glory and the worship of God. Under the pungent feelings of sorrow and repentance for their national sins, of which apostacy from the service of the true God was the chief, and under the yet fresh and painful remembrance of their protracted captivity they vowed, and, feeling the impulse of ardent devotion as well as of gratitude for their restoration, flattered themselves they would never forget their vow, to be the Lord's.

## CHAPTER XI.

**1-3. THE RULERS, VOLUNTARY MEN AND EVERY TENTH MAN, CHOSEN BY LOT, DWELL AT JERUSALEM.** 1. **the rulers . . . dwelt at Jerusalem**—That city being the metropolis of the country, it was right and proper that the seat of government should be there. But the exigency of the times required that special measures should be taken to insure the residence of an adequate population for the custody of the buildings and the defense of the city. From the annoyances of restless and malignant enemies, who tried every means to demolish the rising fortifications, there was some danger attending a settlement in Jerusalem, and hence the greater part of the returned exiles, in order to earn as well as secure the rewards of their duty, preferred to remain in the country or the provincial towns. To remedy this state of things it was resolved to select every tenth man of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, by lot, to become a permanent inhabitant of the capital. The necessity of such an expedient commended it to the general approval. It was the more readily submitted to, that the lot was resorted to on all the most critical conjunctures of the Jewish history and regarded by the people as a Divine decision (Proverbs, 18. 18). This awakened strongly the national spirit; and patriotic volunteers came readily forward to meet the wishes of the authorities, a service which, implying great self-denial as well as courage, was reckoned in the circumstances of so much importance as entitled them to the public gratitude. No wonder that the conduct of these volunteers drew forth the tribute of public admiration; for they sacrificed their personal safety and comfort for the interests of the community; Jerusalem being, at that time, a place against which the enemies of the Jews were directing a thousand plots; and, therefore, residence in it at such a juncture was attended with expense and various annoyances from which a country life was entirely free.

**3-36. THEIR NAMES.** 3. **the chief of the province**—*i. e.*, Judea. Nehemiah speaks of it, as it then was, a small appendix of the Persian empire. **in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities**—The returned exiles, who had come from Babylon, repaired generally and by a natural impulse, to the lands and cities throughout the country, which had been anciently assigned them. **Israel**—This general name, which designated the descendants of Jacob before the unhappy division of the two kingdoms under Rehoboam, was restored after the captivity, the Israelites being then united with the Jews and all traces of their former separation being obliterated. Although the majority of the returned exiles belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they are here called Israel; because a large number out of all the tribes were now intermingled, and these were principally the occupiers of the rural villages, while none but those of Judah and Benjamin resided in Jerusalem. **the Levites**—these took possession of the cities allotted to them, according as they had opportunity. **the Nethinims**—a certain order of men, either

Gibeonites or persons joined with them, who were devoted to the service of God. 4. **at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah**—The discrepancy that is apparent between this and the list formerly given in 1 Chronicles, 9. 1-9, arose not only from the Jewish and Oriental practice of changing or modifying the names of persons from a change of circumstances, but from the alterations that must have been produced in the course of time. The catalogue, in Chronicles, containing those who came with the first detachment of returned exiles, while the list in this passage probably included also those who returned with Ezra and Nehemiah; or it was most probably made out afterward when several had died, or some who had been inserted as going on the journey, remained, and others came in their stead. 9. **overseer**—*i. e.*, captain or chief. 11. **the ruler of the house of God**—Assistant of the high priest (Numbers, 3. 32; 1 Chronicles, 9. 11; 2 Chronicles, 19. 11). 16. **the oversight of the outward business of the house of God**—*i. e.*, those things which were done outside, or in the country, such as the collecting of the provisions (1 Chronicles, 26. 29). 17. **the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer**—*i. e.*, the leader of the choir which chanted the public praise at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice. That service was always accompanied by some appropriate psalm, the sacred music being selected and guided by the person named. 22. **the sons of Asaph, the singers, were over the business of the house of God**—They were selected to take charge of providing those things which were required for the interior of the temple and its service, while to others was committed the care of the “outward business of the house of God” (*v.* 16). This duty was very properly assigned to the sons of Asaph, for, though they were Levites, they did not repair in rotation to Jerusalem, as the other ministers of religion. Being permanent residents, and employed in duties which were comparatively light and easy, they were very competent to undertake this charge. 23. **it was the king’s commandment**—It was the will of the Persian monarch, in issuing his edict, that the temple service should be revived in all its religious fullness and solemnity; and as this special provision for the singers is said to have been by the king’s commandment, the order was probably given at the request or suggestion of Ezra or Nehemiah. 24. **Pethahiah . . . was at the king’s hand in all matters concerning the people**—This person was intrusted with judicial power, either for the interest or by the appointment of the Persian monarch—and his duty consisted either in adjusting cases of civil dispute, or in regulating fiscal concerns. 25. **some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba**—The whole region in which the villages here mentioned were situated had been completely devastated by the Chaldean invasion; and, therefore, it must be assumed that these villages had been rebuilt before “the children dwelt in them.” 36. **And of the Levites were divisions in Judah and in Benjamin**—rather, for the Levites, *i. e.*, those who were not residents in Jerusalem were distributed in settlements throughout the provinces of Judah and Benjamin.

## CHAPTER XII.

**1-9. PRIESTS AND LEVITES WHO CAME UP WITH ZERUBBABEL.**  
**1. these are the priests**—According to *v.* 7, “the chief of the priests,” the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the priesthood was divided (1 Chronicles, 24. 1-20). Only four of the courses returned from the captivity (*ch.* 7. 39-42; Ezra, 2. 36-39). But these were divided by Zerubbabel, or Jeshua, into the original number of twenty-four. Twenty-two only are enumerated here, and no more than twenty in *v.* 12-21. The discrepancy is owing to the extremely probable circumstance that two of the twenty-four courses had become extinct in Babylon; for none belonging to them are reported as having returned (*v.* 2-5), *viz.*, Hattush and Maadiah may be omitted in the account of those persons’ families (*v.* 12), for these had no sons. **Shealtiel**—or Salathiel. **Ezra**—This was a different person from the pious and patriotic leader. If he were the same person he must now have reached a very patriarchal age—and this longevity was, doubtless, owing to his eminent piety and temperance, which are greatly conducive to the prolongation of life, but, above all, to the special blessing of God, who had preserved and strengthened him for the accomplishment of the important work he was called to undertake in that critical period of the Church’s history. **4. Abijah**—One of the ancestors of John the Baptist (Luke, 1. 5). **9. their brethren were over against them in the watches**—*i. e.*, according to some, their stations—the places where they stood when officiating—“ward over against ward” (*v.* 24); or, according to others, in alternate watches in course of rotation.

**10-47. SUCCESSION OF THE HIGH PRIESTS.** **19. Jeshua begat Joiakim, &c.**—This enumeration was of great importance, not only as establishing their individual purity of descent; but because the chronology of the Jews was henceforth to be reckoned not as formerly by the reigns of their kings, but by the successions of their high priests. **11. Jaddua**—It is an opinion entertained by many commentators that this person was the high priest, whose dignified appearance, solemn manner and splendid costume overawed and interested so strongly the proud mind of Alexander the Great; and if he were not this person, as some object that this Jaddua was not in office till a considerable period after the death of Nehemiah, it might probably be his father, called by the same name. **12. in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers**—*i. e.*, as there had been priests in the days of Jeshua, so in the time of Joiakim, the son and successor of Jeshua; the sons of those persons filled the priestly office in room of their fathers, some of whom were still alive, though many were dead. **23. The sons of Levi . . . were written in the book of the Chronicles**—*i. e.*, the public registers in which the genealogies were kept with great regularity and exactness. **27-43. at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem**—This ceremony of consecrating the wall and gates of the city was an act of piety on the part of Nehemiah, not merely to thank God in a general way for having been enabled to bring the building to

a happy completion, but on the special ground of that city being the place which He had chosen, and its containing the temple, which was hallowed by the manifestation of His presence, and anew set apart to His service. It was on these accounts that Jerusalem was called "the holy city," and by this public and solemn act of religious observance, after a long period of neglect and desecration, it was, as it were, restored to its rightful proprietor. The dedication consisted in a solemn ceremonial, in which the leading authorities, accompanied by the Levitical singers, summoned from all parts of the country, and by a vast concourse of people, marched in imposing procession round the city walls, and, pausing at intervals to engage in united praises, prayer and sacrifices, supplicated the continued presence, favour and blessing on "the holy city." "The assembly convened near Fassa Gate where the procession commences. Then (v. 31) I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall (near the Valley Gate), and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate (through Bethzo). And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah. And (v. 37) at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they (descending by the Tower of Siloam on the interior, and then re-ascending) went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward (by the staircase of the rampart, having descended to dedicate the fountain structures). And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them (both parties having started from the junction of the first and second walls), and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall (beyond the corner gate). And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate (and the gate of Benjamin), and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate (or high gate, at the east end of the bridge). So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and half of the rulers with me (having thus performed the circuit of the investing walls), and arrived in the courts of the temple." [BARCLAY'S CITY OF THE GREAT KING.] 43. the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off—The events of the day, viewed in connection with the now repaired and beautified state of the city, raised the popular feeling to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and the fame of their rejoicings was spread far and near. 44. portions of the law—i. e., prescribed by the law. for Judah rejoiced for the priests and ... Levites that waited—The cause of this general satisfaction was either the full restoration of the temple service, and the reorganized provision for the permanent support of the ministry, or it was the pious character and eminent gifts of the guardians of religion. 45. the singers and the porters kept ... the ward of the purification—i. e., took care that no unclean person was allowed to enter within the precincts of the sacred building. This was the official duty of the porters (2 Chronicles, 23. 19), with whom, owing to the pressure of circumstances, it was deemed expedient that the singers should be associated as assistants. 47.

all Israel... sanctified holy things unto the Levites, &c. — The people, selecting the tithes and first-fruits, devoted them to the use of the Levites, to whom they belonged by appointment of the law. The Levites acted in the same way with the tithes due from them to the priests. Thus all classes of the people displayed a conscientious fidelity in paying the dues to the temple, and the servants of God who were appointed to minister in it.

### CHAPTER XIII.

**1-9.** UPON THE READING OF THE LAW SEPARATION IS MADE FROM THE MIXED MULTITUDE. **1. On that day** — This was not immediately consequent on the dedication of the city wall and gates, but after Nehemiah's return from the Persian court to Jerusalem, his absence having extended over a considerable period. The transaction here described, probably took place on one of the periodical occasions for the public reading of the law, when the people's attention was particularly directed to some violations of it which called for immediate correction. There is another instance afforded, in addition to those which have already fallen under our notice, of the great advantage resulting from the public and periodical reading of the Divine law. It was an established provision for the religious instruction of the people, for diffusing a knowledge and a reverence for the sacred volume, as well as for removing those errors and corruptions which might, in the course of time, have crept in. **the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever** — *i. e.*, not be incorporated into the Israelitish kingdom, nor united in marriage relations with that people (Deuteronomy, 23. 3, 4). This appeal to the authority of the Divine law led to a dissolution of all heathen alliances (ch. 9. 2; Ezra, 10. 3). **4. before this** — The practice of these mixed marriages, in open neglect or violation of the law, had become so common, that even the pontifical house, which ought to have set a better example, was polluted by such an impure mixture. **Eliashib the priest... was allied unto Tobiah** — This person was the high priest (*v.* 28; also ch. 3. 1), who, by virtue of his dignified office, had the superintendence and control of the apartments attached to the temple. The laxity of his principles, as well as of his practice, is sufficiently apparent from his contracting a family connection with so notorious an enemy of Israel as Tobiah. But his obsequious attentions had carried him much farther, for to accommodate so important a person as Tobiah on his occasional visits to Jerusalem, Eliashib had provided him a splendid apartment in the temple. The introduction of so gross an impropriety can be accounted for in no other way than by supposing that in the absence of the priests, and the cessation of the services, the temple was regarded as a common public building, which might, in the circumstances, be appropriated as a palatial residence. **6. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem** — Eliashib — concluding that, as Nehemiah had departed from Jerusalem, and, on the expiry of his allotted term of absence, had resigned his govern-

ment, he had gone not to return — began to use great liberties, and, there being none left whose authority or frown he dreaded, allowed himself to do things most unworthy of his sacred office, and which, though in unison with his own irreligious character, he would not have dared to attempt during the residence of the pious governor. Nehemiah resided twelve years as governor of Jerusalem, and having succeeded in repairing and refortifying the city, he, at the end of that period, returned to his duties in Shushan. How long he remained there is not expressly said, but "after certain days," which is a Scripture phraseology for a year or a number of years, he obtained leave to resume the government of Jerusalem, and, to his deep mortification and regret, found matters in the neglected and disorderly state here described. Such gross irregularities as were practiced — such extraordinary corruptions as had crept in, evidently imply the lapse of a considerable time. Besides, they exhibit the character of Eliashib, the high priest, in a most unfavorable light; for while he ought, by his office, to have preserved the inviolable sanctity of the temple and its furniture, his influence had been directly exercised for evil; especially he had given permission and countenance to a most indecent outrage — the appropriation of the best apartments in the sacred building to a heathen governor, one of the worst and most determined enemies of the people and the worship of God. The very first reform Nehemiah on his second visit resolved upon, was the stopping of this gross profanation, and the chamber which had been polluted by the residence of the idolatrous Ammonite was, after undergoing the process of ritual purification (Numbers, 15. 9), restored to its proper use — a store-house for the sacred vessels.

**10-14. NEHEMIAH REFORMS THE OFFICES IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.**  
**10. And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them** — The people, disgusted with the malversations of Eliashib, or the lax and irregular performance of the sacred rites, withheld the tithes, so that the ministers of religion were compelled for their livelihood to withdraw to their patrimonial possessions in the country; the temple services had ceased: all religious duties fallen into neglect; and the money put into the sacred treasury squandered in the entertainment of an Ammonite heathen, an open and contemptuous enemy of God and his people. The return of the governor put an end to these disgraceful and profane proceedings. He administered a sharp rebuke to those priests, to whom the management of the temple and its services was committed, for the total neglect of their duties, and the violation of the solemn promises which they had made to him at his departure. He upbraided them with the serious charge of having not only withheld from men their dues, but of having robbed God, by neglecting the care of his house and service. And thus having roused them to a sense of duty, and incited them to testify their godly sorrow for their criminal negligence by renewed devotedness to their sacred work, Nehemiah restored the temple services by recalling the dispersed Levites to the regular discharge of their duties, while the people at large, perceiving that their contributions would be no longer perverted to improper uses, willingly brought in their



tithes as formerly. Men of integrity and good report were appointed to act as trustees of the sacred treasures, and thus order, regularity and active service re-established in the temple.

**15-31. THE VIOLATION OF THE SABBATH.** 15. **in those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath**—The cessation of the temple services was necessarily followed by a public profanation of the Sabbath, and this had gone so far that labour was carried on in the fields, and fish brought to the markets on the sacred day. Nehemiah took the decisive step of ordering the city gates to be shut, and not to be opened, till the Sabbath was past; and, in order to insure the faithful execution of this order, he stationed some of his own servants as guards to prevent the introduction of any commodities on that day. On the merchants and various dealers finding admission refused them, they set up booths outside the walls, in hopes of still driving a traffic with the peasantry, but the governor threatened, if they continued, to adopt violent measures for their removal. For this purpose a body of Levites were stationed as sentinels at the gate, with discretionary powers to protect the sanctification of the Sabbath. 24. **could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people**—A mongrel dialect imbibed from their mothers, together with foreign principles and habits. 25. **cursed them**—*i. e.*, pronounced on them an anathema which entailed excommunication. **smote . . . and plucked off their hair**—To cut off the hair of offenders seems to be a punishment rather disgraceful than severe; yet it is supposed that pain was added to disgrace, and that they tore off the hair with violence as if they were plucking a bird alive.

# THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

## CHAPTER I.

**1-22. AHASUERUS MAKES ROYAL FEASTS. I. Ahasuerus**—It is now generally agreed among learned men that the Ahasuerus mentioned in this episode is the Xerxes who figures in Grecian history. **3. made a feast unto all his princes and his servants**—Banquets on so grand a scale, and extending over so great a period, have not been unfrequently provided by the luxurious monarchs of Eastern countries, both in ancient and modern times. The early portion of this festive season, however, seems to have been dedicated to amusement, particularly an exhibition of the magnificence and treasures of the court, and it was closed by a special feast of seven days' continuance, given within the gardens of the royal palace. The ancient palace of Susa has been recently disinterred from an incumbent mass of earth and ruins, and in that palace which is, beyond all doubt, the actual edifice referred to in this passage, there is a great hall of marble pillars. "The position of the great colonnade corresponds with the account here given. It stands on an elevation in the center of the mound, the remainder of which we may well imagine to have been occupied, after the Persian fashion, with a garden and fountains. Thus the colonnade would represent the 'court of the garden of the king's palace' within its 'pillars of marble.' I am even inclined to believe the expression, 'Shushan the palace,' applies especially to this portion of the existing ruins, in contradistinction to the citadel and the city of Shushan" [LOFTUS' CHALDÆA AND SUSIANA.]. **6. Where were white, green and blue hangings, &c.**—The fashion, in the houses of the great on festive occasions, was to decorate the chambers from the middle of the wall downward with damask or velvet hangings of variegated colours suspended on hooks, or taken down at pleasure. **the beds were of gold and silver**—*i. e.*, the couches on which, according to Oriental fashion, the guests reclined, and which were either formed entirely of gold and silver or inlaid with ornaments of those costly metals, stood on an elevated floor of parti-coloured marble. **7. they gave them drink in vessels of gold**—There is reason to believe, from this account, as well as from ch. 5. 6; 7. 2, 7, 8, where the drinking of wine occupies by far the most prominent place in the description, that this was a banquet, rather than a feast. **9. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women**—The celebration was double; for, as according to the Oriental fashion the sexes do not intermingle in society, the court ladies were entertained in a separate apartment by the queen. **10-12. On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine**—As the feast-days advanced, the drinking was more freely indulged in, so that the close was usually marked by great excesses of revelry. **he commanded . . . the seven chamberlains**—these were the eunuchs who had

charge of the royal harem. The refusal of Vashti to obey an order which required her to make an indecent exposure of herself before a company of drunken revelers, was becoming both the modesty of her sex and her rank as queen, for, according to Persian customs, the queen, even more than the wives of other men, was secluded from the public gaze; and had not the king's blood been heated with wine, or his reason overpowered by force of offended pride, he would have perceived that his own honour, as well as hers was consulted by her dignified conduct. 13. **Then the king said to the wise men** — These were probably the magi, without whose advice as to the proper time of doing a thing, the Persian kings; never did take any step whatever; and the persons named in the following verse were the "seven counselors" (Cf. Ezra, 7. 14), who formed the State ministry. The combined wisdom of all, it seems, was enlisted to consult with the king what course should be taken after so unprecedented an occurrence as Vashti's disobedience of the royal summons. It is scarcely possible for us to imagine the astonishment produced by such a refusal in a country and a court where the will of the sovereign was absolute. The assembled grandees were petrified with horror at the daring affront; alarm for the consequences that might ensue to each of them in his own household next seized on their minds, and the sounds of bacchanalian revelry were hushed into deep and anxious consultation what punishment to inflict on the refractory queen. But a purpose was to be served by the flattery of the king and the enslavement of all women. The counselors were too intoxicated or obsequious to oppose the courtly advice of Memucan. It was unanimously resolved, with a wise regard to the public interests of the nation, that the punishment of Vashti could be nothing short of degradation from her royal dignity. The doom was accordingly pronounced and made known in all parts of the empire.

## CHAPTER II.

1-20. **ESTHER CHOSEN TO BE QUEEN.** I. **After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was appeased** — On recovering from the violent excitement of his revelry and rage, the king was pierced with poignant regret for the unmerited treatment he had given to his beautiful and dignified queen. But, according to the law, which made the word of a Persian king irrevocable, she could not be restored. His counselors, for their own sake, were solicitous to remove his disquietude, and hastened to recommend the adoption of all suitable means for gratifying their royal master with another consort of equal or superior attractions to those of his divorced queen. In the despotic countries of the East, the custom obtains that, when an order is sent to a family for a young damsel to repair to the royal palace, the parents, however unwilling, dare not refuse the honour for their daughter, and although they know that when she is once into the royal harem, they will never see her again, they are obliged to yield a silent and passive compliance. On the occasion referred to, a general search was

commanded to be made for the greatest beauties throughout the empire, in the hope that, from their ranks, the disconsolate monarch might select one for the honour of succeeding to the royal honours of Vashti. The damsels, on arrival at the palace, were placed under the custody of **Hege, the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women** — *i. e.*, the chief eunuch, usually a repulsive old man, on whom the court ladies are very dependent, and whose favour they are always desirous to secure. 5. **Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew** — Mordecai held some office about the court. But "his sitting at the king's gate" (*v.* 21) does not necessarily imply that he was in the humble condition of a porter; for, according to an institute of Cyrus, all state officers were required to wait in the outer courts till they were summoned into the presence chamber. He might, therefore, have been a person of some official dignity. This man had an orphan niece, born during the exile, under his care, who, being distinguished by great personal beauty, was one of the young damsels taken into the royal harem on this occasion, and had the good fortune at once to gain the good will of the chief eunuch. Her sweet and amiable appearance made her a favourite with all who looked on her (*v.* 15, last clause). Her Hebrew name (*v.* 7) was Hadassah, *i. e.*, myrtle, which, on her introduction into the royal harem, was changed for Esther, *i. e.*, the star Venus, indicating beauty and good fortune. [GESENIUS.] 11. **Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house** — The harem is an inviolable sanctuary, and what is transacted within its walls is as much a secret to those without as if they were thousands of miles away. But hints were given him through the eunuchs. 12. **Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to King Ahasuerus** — A whole year was spent in preparation for the intended honour. Considering that this took place in a palace, the long period prescribed, together with the profusion of costly and fragrant cosmetics employed, was probably required by state etiquette. 17. **the king loved Esther above all the women** — The choice fell on Esther, who found favour in the eyes of Ahasuerus, and elevated her to the dignity of chief wife or queen. The other competitors had apartments assigned them in the royal harem, and were retained in the rank of secondary wives, of whom Oriental princes have a great number. **he sat the royal crown upon her head** — This consisted only of a purple riband, striped with white, bound round the forehead. The nuptials were celebrated by a magnificent entertainment, and, in honour of the auspicious occasion, **he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts according to the state of the king** — The dotation of Persian queens consisted in consigning to them the revenue of certain cities, in various parts of the kingdom, for defraying their personal and domestic expenditure. Some of these imposts the king remitted or lessened at this time.

21-23. MORDECAI, DISCOVERING A TREASON, IS RECORDED IN THE CHRONICLES. 21. **In those days . . . two of the king's chamberlains . . . were wroth and sought to lay hand on the king, &c.** This secret conspiracy against the king's life probably arose out of revenge for the divorce of Vashti, in whose interest, and at

whose instigation, these eunuchs may have acted. Through the vigilance of Mordecai, whose fidelity, however, passed unnoticed, the design was frustrated, while the conspirators were condemned to be executed; and, as the matter was recorded in the court annals, it became the occasion, afterward, of Mordecai's preferment to the place of power and influence for which, in furtherance of the national interests of the Jews, Divine providence intended him.

## CHAPTER III.

**1-15. HAMAN ADVANCED BY THE KING, AND DESPISED BY MORDECAI, SEEKS REVENGE ON ALL THE JEWS.** 1. **After these things did Ahasuerus promote Haman . . . and set his seat above all the princes**—*i. e.*, raised him to the rank of a vizier, or prime confidential minister, whose pre-eminence in office and power appeared in the elevated state chair appropriated to that supreme functionary. Such a distinction in seats was counted of vast importance in the formal court of Persia. 2. **all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman**—Large mansions in the East are entered by a spacious vestibule, or gateway, along the sides of which visitors sit, and are received by the master of the house; for none, except the nearest relatives or special friends, are admitted farther. There the officers of the ancient king of Persia waited till they were called, and did obeisance to the all-powerful minister of the day. **but Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence**—The obsequious homage of prostration, not entirely foreign to the manners of the East, had not been claimed by former viziers; but this minion required that all subordinate officers of the court should bow before him with their faces to the earth. But to Mordecai it seemed that such an attitude of profound reverence was due only to God. Haman being an Amalekite, one of a doomed and accursed race, was, doubtless, another element in the refusal: and on learning that the recusant was a Jew, whose nonconformity was grounded on religious scruples, the magnitude of the affront appeared so much the greater, as the example of Mordecai would be imitated by all his compatriots. Had the homage been a simple token of civil respect, Mordecai would not have refused it; but the Persian kings demanded a sort of adoration, which, it is well known, even the Greeks reckoned it a degradation to express, and as Xerxes, in the height of his favouritism, had commanded the same honours to be given to the minister as to himself, this was the ground of Mordecai's refusal. 7. **In the first month . . . they cast Pur, that is, the lot**—In resorting to this method of ascertaining the most auspicious day for putting his atrocious scheme into execution, Haman acted as the kings and nobles of Persia have always done, never engaging in any enterprise without consulting the astrologers, and being satisfied as to the lucky hour. Vowing vengeance, but scorning to lay hands on a single victim, he meditated the extirpation of the whole Jewish race, who, he knew, were sworn enemies of his countrymen, and by artfully representing them as a people who were

aliens in manners and habits, and enemies to the rest of his subjects, procured the king's sanction to the intended massacre. One motive which he used in urging his point was addressed to the king's cupidity. Fearing lest his master might object that the extermination of a numerous body of his subjects would seriously depress the public revenue, Haman promised to make up the loss.

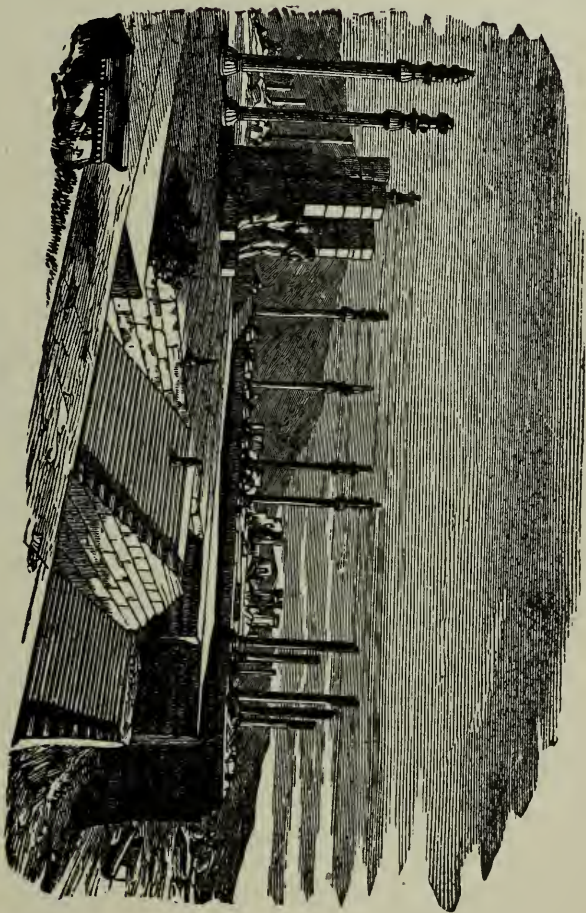
**9. I will pay ten thousand talents of silver . . . into the king's treasuries**—This sum, reckoning by the Babylonish talent, will be about £2,119,000; but estimated according to the Jewish talent, it will considerably exceed £3,000,000, an immense contribution to be made out of a private fortune. But classic history makes mention of several persons whose resources seem almost incredible.

**10. the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman**—There was a seal or signet in the ring. The bestowment of the ring, with the king's name and that of his kingdom engraven on it, was given with much ceremony, and it was equivalent to putting the sign manual to a royal edict. **12-15. Then were the king's scribes called . . . and there was written**—The government secretaries were employed in making out the proclamation authorizing a universal massacre of the Jews on one day. It was translated into the dialects of all the people throughout the vast empire, and swift messengers sent to carry it into all the provinces, and, on the day appointed, all Jews were to be put to death, and their property confiscated; doubtless, the means by which Haman hoped to pay his stipulated tribute into the exchequer. To us it appears unaccountable how any sane monarch could have given his consent to the extirpation of a numerous class of his subjects. But such acts of frenzied barbarity have, alas, been not rarely authorized by careless and voluptuous despots, who have allowed their ears to be engrossed and their policy directed by haughty and selfish minions, who had their own passions to gratify, their own ends to serve.

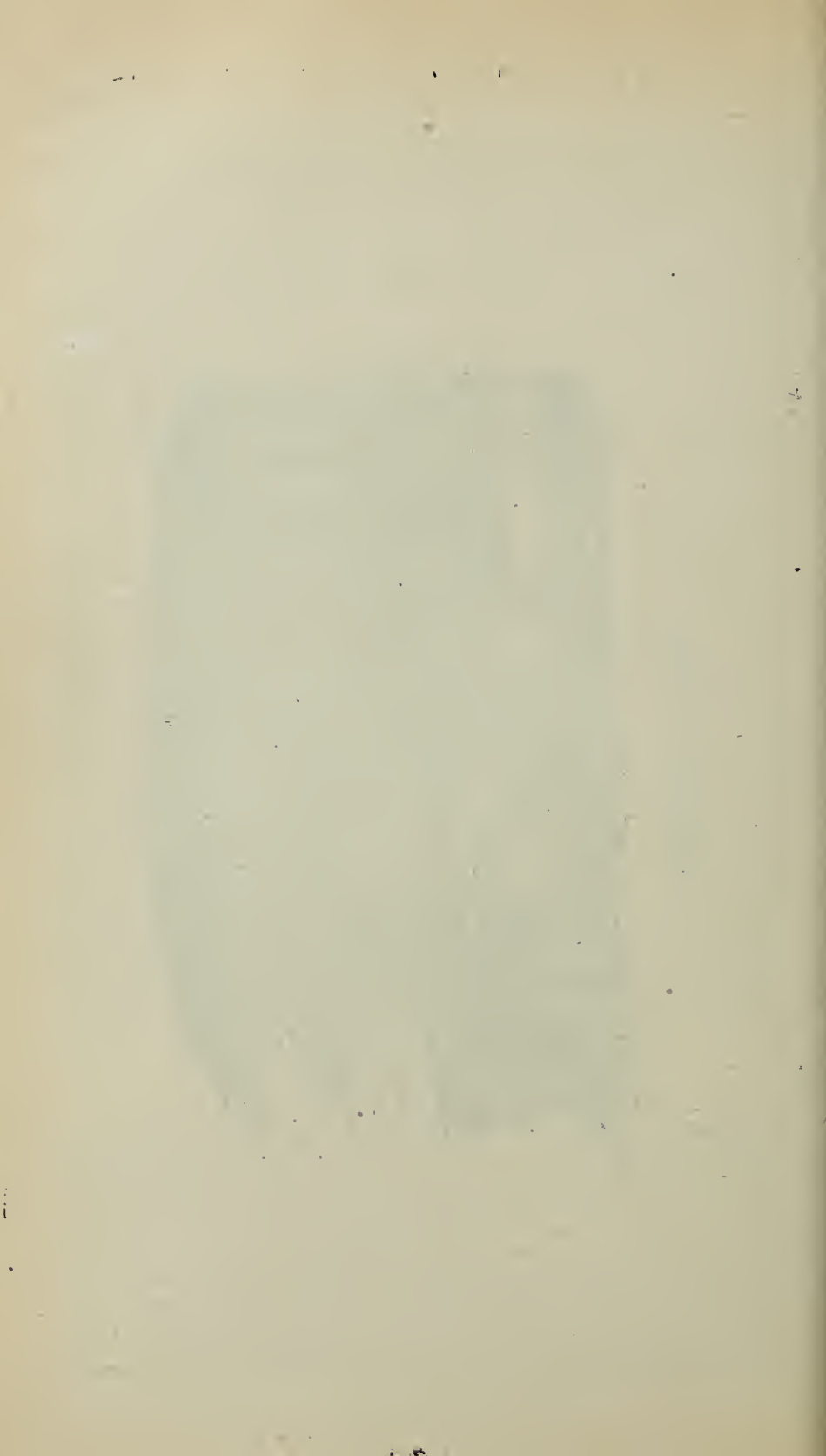
**the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed**—The completeness of the word-painting in this verse is exquisite. The historian, by a simple stroke, has drawn a graphic picture of an Oriental despot wallowing with his favourite in sensual enjoyments, while his tyrannical cruelties were rending the hearts and homes of thousands of his subjects.

## CHAPTER IV.

**1-14. MORDECAI AND THE JEWS MOURN. I. When Mordecai perceived all that was done**—Relying on the irrevocable nature of a Persian monarch's decree (Daniel, 6. 15), Haman made it known as soon as the royal sanction had been obtained, and Mordecai was, doubtless, among the first to hear of it. On his own account, as well as on that of his countrymen, this astounding decree must have been indescribably distressing. The acts described in this passage are, according to the Oriental fashion, expressive of the most poignant sorrow; and his approach to the gate of the palace, under the impulse of irrepressible emotions, was to make an earnest though vain appeal to the royal mercy. Access; how-



Ruins of Persepolis.





ever, to the king's presence was, to a person in his disfigured state, impossible: **for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.** But he found means of conveying intelligence of the horrid plot to queen Esther. 4. **Then was the queen . . . grieved; and . . . sent raiment to . . . Mordecai**—Her object in doing so was either to qualify him for resuming his former office, or else, perhaps, of fitting him to come near enough the palace to inform her of the cause of such sudden and extreme distress.

5. **Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her**—Communication with the women in the harem is hardly ever to be obtained, and only through the medium of the keepers. The chief eunuch receives the message from the lips of the queen, conveys it to some inferior officer of the seraglio, and, when the commission is executed, the subaltern communicates it to the superintendent, by whom it is delivered to the queen. This chief eunuch, usually an old man who has recommended himself by a long course of faithful service, is always appointed by the king; but it is his interest, as well as his duty, to ingratiate himself with the queen also; and, accordingly, we find Hatach rendering himself very serviceable in carrying on those private communications with Mordecai, who was thereby enabled to enlist her powerful influence. 8. **charge her that she should go in unto the king**—This language is exceedingly strong, and, as it can scarcely be supposed that Mordecai was still using authority over Esther as his adopted daughter, he must be considered as imploring rather than commanding her, in the name of her brethren, and in the name of her God, to make a direct appeal to the feelings of her royal husband. II. **whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called**—

The Persian kings surrounded themselves with an almost impassable circle of forms. The law alluded to was first enacted by Deioces, king of Media, and afterward, when the empires were united, adopted by the Persians, that all business should be transacted; and petitions transmitted to the king, through his ministers; and although the restriction was not intended, of course, to apply to the queen, yet from the strict and inflexible character of the Persian laws, and the extreme desire to exalt the majesty of the sovereign, even his favourite wife had not the privilege of *entre*, except by special favor and indulgence. Esther was suffering from the severity of this law; and as, from not being admitted for a whole month to the king's presence, she had reason to fear that the royal affections had become alienated from her, she had little hope of serving her country's cause in this awful emergency. 13, 14. **Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther**—His answer was to this effect, that Esther need not indulge the vain hope she would, from her royal connection, escape the general doom of her race—that he (Mordecai) confidently believed God would interpose, and, if not through her, by some other deliverer, save His people; but that the duty evidently devolved on her, as there was great reason to believe that this was the design of Providence in her elevation to the dignity of queen, and, therefore, that she should go with a courageous heart,

not doubting of success. 16. **so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law**—The appeal of Mordecai was irresistible; and having appointed a solemn fast of three days, she expressed her firm resolution to make an appeal to the king, though she should perish in the attempt. **I... and my maidens**—It is probable that she had surrounded herself with Jewish maidens, or women who were proselytes to that religion.

## CHAPTER V.

### 1-14. ESTHER INVITES THE KING AND HAMAN TO A BANQUET.

1. **Esther put on her royal apparel**—It was not only natural, but, on such occasions highly proper and expedient, that the queen should decorate herself in a style becoming her exalted station. On ordinary occasions she might reasonably set off her charms to as much advantage as possible; but, on the present occasion, as she was desirous to secure the favour of one who sustained the two-fold character of her husband and her sovereign, public as well as private considerations—a regard to her personal safety, no less than the preservation of her doomed countrymen—urged upon her the propriety of using every legitimate means of recommending herself to the favourable notice of Ahasuerus. **the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house**—The palace of this Persian king seems to have been built, like many more of the same quality and description, with an advanced cloister over against the gate, made in the fashion of a large penthouse, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front or else in the center. In such open structures as these, in the midst of their guards and counselors, are the *bashaws*, kadis and other great officers accustomed to distribute justice and transact the public affairs of the provinces. [SHAW'S TRAVELS.] In such a situation the Persian king was seated. The seat he occupied was not a *throne*, according to our ideas of one, but simply a chair and so high that it required a footstool. It was made of gold or, at least, inlaid with that metal and covered with splendid tapestry and no one, save the king, might sit down on it under pain of death. It is often found pictured on the Persepolitan monuments and always of the same fashion. 2. **the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand**—This golden sceptre receives an interesting illustration from the sculptured monuments of Persia and Assyria. In the bas-reliefs of Persepolis, copied by Sir Robert Ker Porter, we see king Darius enthroned in the midst of his court and walking abroad in equal state; in either case he carries in his right hand a slender rod or wand, about equal in length to his own height, ornamented with a small knob at the summit. In the Assyrian alabasters, as well those found at Nimroud as those from Khorsabad, "the great king" is furnished with the same appendage of royalty, a slender rod, but destitute of any knob or ornament. On the Khorsabad reliefs the rod is painted red, *doubtless to represent gold*; proving that "the golden sceptre" was

a simple wand of that precious metal, commonly held in the right hand, with one end resting on the ground, and that whether the king was sitting or walking. "The gold sceptre" has received little alteration or modification since ancient times. [Goss.] It was extended to Esther as a token that not only her intrusion was pardoned, but that her visit was welcome and a favourable reception given to the suit she had come to prefer. **touched the top of the sceptre**—This was the usual way of acknowledging the royal condescension, and at the same time expressing reverence and submission to the august majesty of the king. **3. it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom**—This mode of speaking originated in the Persian custom of appropriating for the maintenance of great men or royal favourites, one city for his bread, another for his wine, a third for his clothes, &c., so that the phrase denoted great liberality. **4. let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him**—There was great address in this procedure of Esther's; for, by showing such high respect to the king's favourite, she would the better insinuate herself into the royal affections; and gain a more suitable opportunity of making known her request. **8. let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare**—The king ate alone and his guests in an adjoining hall; but they were admitted to sit with him at wine. Haman being the only invited guest with the king and queen, it was natural that he should have been elated with the honour.

## CHAPTER VI.

## I-14. AHASUERUS REWARDS MORDECAI FOR FORMER SERVICE.

**I. the king . . . commanded to bring the book of records of the Chronicles**—In Eastern courts, there are scribes or officers whose duty it is to keep a journal of every occurrence worthy of notice. A book of this kind, abounding with anecdotes, is full of interest, and it has been a custom with Eastern kings, in all ages, frequently to cause the annals of the kingdom to be read to them. It is resorted to, not merely as a pastime to while away the tedium of an hour, but a source of instruction to the monarch, by reviewing the important incidents of his own life, as well as those of his ancestors. There was, therefore, nothing uncommon in this Persian monarch calling for the court-journal. But, in his being unable to sleep at that particular juncture, in his ordering the book then to be read to him, and in his attention having been specially directed to the important, and as yet unrewarded, services of Mordecai, the immediate interposition of Providence is distinctly visible. **4. Now Haman was come into the outward court**—This was early in the morning. It is the invariable custom for kings in Eastern countries to transact business before the sun is hot, often in the open air, and so Haman was in all probability come officially to attend on his master. **6. What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?**—In bestowing tokens of their favour, the kings of Persia do not at once, and as it were by their

own will, determine the kind of honour that shall be awarded ; but they turn to the courtier standing next in rank to themselves, and ask him what shall be done to the individual who has rendered the services specified ; and, according to the answer received, the royal mandate is issued. 8. **the royal apparel . . . which the king useth to wear** — A coat which has been on the back of a king or prince which is reckoned a most honourable gift, and is given with great ceremony. **the horse that the king rideth upon** — Persia was a country of horses, and the high-bred charger the king rode upon acquired, in the eyes of his venal subjects, a sort of sacredness from that circumstance. **and the crown royal which is set upon his head** — Either the royal turban, or it may be a tiara, with which, on state processions, the horse's head was adorned. 9. **delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes . . . array the man** — On grand and public occasions, the royal steed is led by the highest subject through the principal streets of the city, a ceremony which may occupy several hours. 11. **Then Haman took, &c.** — This sudden reverse, however painful to Haman as an individual, is particularly characteristic of the Persian manners. 14. **came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet** — Besides the invitation given to an entertainment, a message is always sent to the guests, immediately at the day and hour appointed, to announce that all things are ready.

## CHAPTER VII.

1-6. ESTHER SUES FOR HER OWN LIFE AND THE LIFE OF HER PEOPLE. 4. **we are sold, I and my people to be destroyed** — *i. e.*, by the cruel and perfidious scheme of that man, who offered an immense sum of money to purchase our extermination. Esther dwelt on his contemplated atrocity, in a variety of expressions, which both evinced the depth of her own emotions, and were intended to awaken similar feelings in the king's breast. **But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen. I had held my tongue** — Though a great calamity to the Jews, the enslavement of that people might have enriched the national exchequer, and, at all events, the policy, if found from experience to be bad, could be altered. But the destruction of such a body of people would be an irreparable evil, and all the talents Haman might pour into the treasury could not compensate for the loss of their services.

7-10. THE KING CAUSES HAMAN TO BE HANGED ON HIS OWN GALLOWS. 7. **he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king** — When the king of Persia orders an offender to be executed, and then rises and goes into the women's apartment, it is a sign that no mercy is to be hoped for. Even the sudden rising of the king in anger was the same as if he had pronounced sentence. 8. **Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was** — We do not know the precise form of the couches on which the Persians reclined at table. But it is probable that they were not very different from those used by the Greeks and Romans. Haman, perhaps, at first stood up to beg pardon of Esther, but driven in

his extremity to resort to an attitude of the most earnest supplication, he fell prostrate on the couch where the queen was recumbent. The king returning that instant was fired at what seemed an outrage on female modesty. **they covered Haman's face**—The import of this striking action is that a criminal is unworthy any longer to look on the face of the king, and hence, when malefactors are consigned to their doom in Persia, the first thing is to cover the face with a veil or napkin. 9. **Harbonah one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold, also, the gallows**—This eunuch had probably been the messenger sent with the invitation to Haman, and on that occasion had seen the gallows. The information he now volunteered, as well it may be from abhorrence of Haman's cold-blooded conspiracy as with sympathy with his amiable mistress, involved with her people in imminent peril. 10. **So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared**—He had not been the only plotter of mischief whose feet have been taken in the net which they hid (Psalm 9. 15). But never was condemnation more just, and retribution more merited, than the execution of the gigantic criminal.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**1-6. MORDECAI ADVANCED.** 1. **On that day did . . . Ahasuerus give the house of Haman . . . unto Esther**—His property was confiscated, and every thing belonging to him, as some compensation for the peril to which she had been exposed. **Mordecai came before the king**—*i. e.*, was introduced at court, and appointed one of the seven counselors. Esther displayed great prudence and address in acknowledging Mordecai's relation to her at the moment most fitted to be of eminent service to him. 2. **the king took off his ring . . . and gave it to Mordecai**—By that act transferring to him all the power and authority which the ring symbolized, and promoting him to the high dignity which Haman had formerly filled. 3. **Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman**—As her steward, or factor, to manage that large and opulent estate which had been assigned to her. **Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet**—The king was then not reclining at table, but sitting on a divan, most probably in the Persian attitude, leaning back against the cushions, and one foot under him. **besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman**—*i. e.*, to repeal the sanguinary edict which, at the secret instigation of Haman, had been recently passed (ch. 3. 12). 4. **Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther**—In token that her request was accepted, and that she needed no longer to maintain the humble attitude of a suppliant. 5, 6. **reverse the letters devised by Haman . . . to destroy the Jews**—The whole conduct of Esther in this matter is characterised by great tact, and the variety of expressions by which she describes her willing submission to her royal husband, the address with which she rolls the whole infamy of the meditated massacre on Haman, and the argument she draws from the king's sanction being surreptitious

obtained, that the decree should be immediately reversed — all indicate the queen's wisdom and skill, and she succeeds in this point also.

**7-14. AHASUERUS GRANTS TO THE JEWS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES** 8. **Write . . . in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring** — Hence it is evident that the royal ring had a seal in it which, being affixed to any document, authenticated it with the stamp of royal authority. **which . . . may no man reverse** — This is added as the reason why he could not comply with the queen's request for a direct reversal or recall of Haman's letters. *viz.*, that the laws of the Medes and Persians, once passed, were irrevocable. **10. sent . . . by posts . . . and riders on . . . camels, and young dromedaries** — The business being very urgent, the swiftest kind of camel would be employed, and so the word in the original denotes — the *wind-camel* — young dromedaries also are used to carry expresses, being remarkable for the nimbleness and ease of their movements. Animals of this description could convey the new rescript of Ahasuerus over the length and breadth of the Persian empire in time to relieve the unhappy Jews from the ban under which they lay. **11-13. the king granted to the Jews . . . to stand for their life . . . to slay . . . all . . . that would assault them** — The fixed and unalterable character claimed for Persian edicts often placed the king in a very awkward dilemma; for, however bitterly he might regret things done in a moment of haste and thoughtlessness, it was beyond even his power to prevent the consequences. This was the reason, on account of which the king was laid under a necessity not to reverse but to issue a contradictory edict; according to which it was enacted that, if pursuant to the first decree the Jews were assaulted, they might, by virtue of the second, defend themselves, and even slay their enemies. However strange and even ridiculous this mode of procedure may appear, it was the only one which, from the peculiarities of court etiquette in Persia, could be adopted. Instances occur in sacred (Daniel 6. 14), no less than profane, history. Many passages of the Bible attest the truth of this, particularly the well-known incident of Daniel's being cast into the den of lions, in conformity with the rash decree of Darius, though, as it afterward appeared, contrary to the personal desire of that monarch. That the law of Persia has undergone no change in this respect, and the power of the monarch not less immutable, appear from many anecdotes related in the books of modern travellers through that country.

**15-17. MORDECAI'S HONOURS, AND THE JEWS' JOY.** 15. **Mordecai went out . . . in royal apparel** — He was invested with the *khe-laat* of official honour. A dress of blue and white was held in great estimation among the Persians; so that Mordecai, whom the king delighted to honour, was in fact arrayed in the royal dress and insignia. The variety and the kind of insignia worn by a favourite at once makes known to the people the particular dignity to which he has been raised.

## CHAPTER IX.

**1-19. THE JEWS SLAY THEIR ENEMIES WITH THE TEN SONS OF HAMAN. 1. in the twelfth month, . . . on the thirteenth day of same**—This was the day which Haman's superstitious advisers had led him to select as the most fortunate for the execution of his exterminating scheme against the Jews. **2. The Jews gathered themselves . . . no man could withstand them**—The tables were now turned in their favour; and though their enemies made their long meditated attack, they were not only at liberty to act on the defensive; but through the powerful influence enlisted on their side at court, together with the blessings of God, they were everywhere victorious. **the fear of them fell upon all people**—This impression arose not alone from the consciousness of the all-powerful vizier being their countryman, but from the hand of God appearing so visibly interposed to effect their strange and unexpected deliverance. **5-16. Thus the Jews smote all their enemies**—The effect of the two antagonistic decrees was, in the mean time, to raise a fierce and bloody war between the Jews and their enemies throughout the Persian empire; but through the dread of Esther and Mordecai, the provincial governors universally favoured their cause, so that their enemies fell in great numbers. **13. let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree**—Their enemies adroitly concealing themselves for the first day might have returned on the next, when they imagined that the privilege of the Jews was expired; so that that people would have been surprised and slain. The extension of the decree to another day at the queen's special desire has exposed her to the charge of being actuated by a cruel and vindictive disposition. But her conduct in making this request is capable of full vindication, on the ground (1) that Haman's sons having taken a prominent part in avenging their father's fall, and having been previously slain in the *melee*, the order for the exposure of their dead bodies on the gallows was only intended to brand them with public infamy for their malice and hatred to the Jews; and (2) the anti-Jewish party having, in all probability, been instigated through the arts or influence of Haman to acts of spiteful and wanton oppression, the existing state of feeling among the natives required some vigorous and decisive measures to prevent the outbreak of future aggressions. The very circumstance of their slaying 800 Jews in the immediate vicinity of the court (*v.* 6, 15), is a proof of the daring energy and deep-rooted malice by which multitudes were actuated against the Jews. To order an extension, therefore, of the permissive edict to the Jews to defend themselves, was, perhaps, no more than affording an opportunity for their enemies to be publicly known; and though it led to so awful a slaughter of 75,000 of their enemies, there is reason to believe that these were chiefly Amalekites, in the fall of whom on this occasion, the prophecies (Exodus, 17. 14, 16 Deuteronomy, 25. 19) against their doomed race were accomplished. **19. a day of . . . feasting . . . and of sending portions one to another**

— The princes and people of the East not only invite their friends to the feast, but it is their custom to send a portion of the banquet to those that cannot well come to it, especially their relations, and those who are detained at home in a state of sorrow or distress.

**20-32. THE TWO DAYS OF PURIM MADE FESTIVAL.** 20. **Mordecai wrote these things** — Commentators are not agreed what is particularly meant by “these things;” whether the letters following, or an account of these marvellous events to be preserved in the families of the Jewish people, and transmitted from one generation to another. 26. **they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur** — Pur, in the Persian language, signifies lot; and the feast of Purim, or lots, has a reference to the time having been pitched upon by Haman through the decision of the lot. In consequence of the signal national deliverance which Divine providence gave them from the infamous machinations of Haman, Mordecai ordered the Jews to commemorate that event by an anniversary festival, which was to last for two days, in accordance with the two days war of defense they had to maintain. There was at first a slight difference in the time of this festival; for the Jews in the provinces, having defended themselves against their enemies on the thirteenth, devoted the fourteenth to festivity; whereas their brethren in Shushan, having extended that work over two days, did not observe their thanksgiving feast till the fifteenth. But this was remedied by authority, which fixed the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar. It became a season of sunny memories to the universal body of the Jews; and, by the letters of Mordecai, dispersed through all parts of the Persian empire, it was established as an annual feast, the celebration of which is kept up still. On both days of the feast, the modern Jews read over the Megillah or Book of Esther in their synagogues. The copy read must not be printed, but written on vellum in the form of a roll; and the names of the ten sons of Haman are written on it in a peculiar manner, being ranged, they say, like so many bodies on a gibbet. The reader must pronounce all these names in one breath. Whenever Haman’s name is pronounced, they make a terrible noise in the synagogue. Some drum with their feet on the floor, and the boys have mallets with which they knock and make a noise. They prepare themselves for their carnival by a previous fast, which should continue three days, in imitation of Esther’s; but they have mostly reduced it to one day (JENNING’S JEWISH ANTIQUITIES).

## CHAPTER X.

**1-3. AHASUERUS GREATNESS. MORDECAI’S ADVANCEMENT.** 1. **Ahasuerus laid a tribute** — This passage being an appendix to the history, and improperly separated from the preceding chapter, it might be that the occasion of levying this new impost arose out of the commotions raised by Haman’s conspiracy. Neither the nature nor the amount of the tax has been recorded; only it was not a local tribute but one exacted from all parts of his vast empire. 2. **the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai** — The



experience of this pious and excellent Jew verified the statement, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." From sitting contentedly at the king's gate, he was raised to the dignity of highest subject, the powerful ruler of the kingdom. Acting uniformly on the great principles of truth and righteousness, his greatness rested on a firm foundation. His faith was openly avowed and his influence, as a professor of the true religion, was of the greatest usefulness for promoting the welfare of the Jewish people, as well as for advancing the glory of God. 3. **Mordecai . . . was next unto king Ahasuerus . . . great among the Jews, &c.**—The elevation of this pious and patriotic Jew to the possession of the highest official power was of very great importance to the suffering church at that period; for it enabled him, who all along possessed the disposition, now to direct the royal influence and authority in promoting the interests and extending the privileges of his exiled countrymen. Viewed in this light, the providence of God is plainly traceable in all the steps that led to his unexpected advancement, and this providential interposition is all the more remarkable that, as in the analogous case of Joseph, it was displayed in making the ordinary and natural course of things lead to the most marvelous results. To use the pious words of an eminent prelate, "though in the whole of this episode there was no extraordinary manifestation of God's power, no particular cause or agent that was in its working advanced above the ordinary pitch of nature; yet the contrivance, and suiting these ordinary agents appointed by God is in itself more admirable than if the same end had been effected by means that were truly miraculous." The sudden advancement of individuals from obscurity and neglect to the highest stations of power and influence is in Eastern courts no extraordinary nor unfrequent occurrence. The caprice—the weak partiality of the reigning sovereign, or, it may be, his penetrating discernment in discovering latent energy and talent, has often "raised the beggar from the dunghill, and set him among princes." Some of the all-powerful viziers in modern Persia, and not a few of the beys in Egypt, have been elevated to their respective dignities in this manner. And, therefore, the advancement of "Mordecai, who was next unto Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews," was in perfect accordance with the rapid revolution of "the wheel of fortune" in that part of the world. But, considering all the circumstances of Mordecai's advancement, not only his gaining the favour of the king, but his being "accepted of the multitude of his brethren, it was beyond all controversy the doing of the Lord, and was truly marvelous in his people's eyes." **accepted of the multitude of his brethren**—Far from being envious of his grandeur, they blessed God for the elevation to official power of so good a man **speaking peace to all his seed**—While his administration was conducted with a mild and impartial hand, he showed a peculiarly warm and friendly feeling to all his countrymen when asked his counsel or his aid,

# INTRODUCTION.

## THE BOOK OF

## J O B.

**JOB A REAL PERSON.**—It has been supposed by some that the Book of Job is an allegory, not a real narrative, on account of the artificial character of many of its statements. Thus the sacred number, *three* and *seven*, often occur. He had *seven* thousand sheep, *seven* sons, both before and after his trials; his *three* friends sit down with him *seven* day and *seven* nights; both before and after his trials he had *three* daughters. So also the number and form of the speeches of the several speakers seem to be artificial. The name of Job, too, is derived from an Arabic word signifying *repentance*.

But Ez. 14. 14 (cf. v. 16, 20), speaks of "Job" in conjunction with "Noah and Daniel," real persons. St. James (5. 11), also refers to Job as an example of "patience," which he would not have been likely to do had Job been only a fictitious person. Also the names of persons and places are specified with a particularity not to be looked for in an allegory. As to the exact *doubling* of his possessions after his restoration, no doubt the *round* number is given for the exact number, as the latter approached near the former; this is often done in undoubtedly *historical* books. As to the studied number and form of the speeches, it seems likely that the arguments were *substantially* those which appear in the Book, but that *the studied and poetic form* were given by Job himself guided by the Holy Spirit. He lived 140 years after his trials, and nothing would be more natural, than that he should, at his leisure, mould into a perfect form the arguments used in the momentous debate, for the instruction of the Church in all ages. Probably, too, the debate itself occupied several sittings; and the number of speeches assigned to each was arranged by preconcerted agreement, and each was allowed the interval of a day or more to prepare carefully his speech and replies: this will account for the speakers bringing forward their arguments in regular series, no one speaking out of his turn. As to the name Job—*repentance*—(supposing the derivation correct) it was common in old times to give a name from circumstances which occurred at an advanced period of life, and this is no argument against the reality of the person.

**WHERE JOB LIVED.**—Uz, according to [*Ges.*] means a light sandy soil, and was in the N. of Arabia Deserta, between Palestine and the Euphrates, called by Ptolemy (*Geog.* 19) *Ausitai* or *Aisitai*. In Gen. 10. 23; 22. 21: 36, 28; and 1 Chr. 1. 17, 42, it is the name of a man; in Jer. 25. 20; Lam. 4. 21; and Job 1. 1, it is a country. Uz, in Gen. 22. 21, is said to be the son of Nahor, brother of Abraham, a different person from the one mentioned (Gen. 10. 23), a grandson of Shem. The probability is, that the country took its name from the latter of the two; for this one was the son of Aram, from whom the Arameans take their name, and these dwelt in Mesopotamia, between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Cf. as to the dwelling of the sons of Shem in Gen. 10. 30, "a mount of the East," answering to "men of the East" (Job, 1. 3). *Rawl.*, in his deciphering of the Assyrian inscriptions, states that "Uz is the prevailing name of the country at the mouth of the Euphrates." It is probable that Eliphaz the Temanite and the Sabeans dwelt in that quarter; and we know that the Chaldeans resided there, and not near Idumea, which some identify with Uz. The tornado from "the wilderness" (ch. 1. 19,) agrees with the view of it being Arabia Deserta. Job (ch. 1. 3,) is called "the greatest of the men of the East;" but Idumea was not E., but S. of Palestine: therefore in Scripture language, the phrase cannot apply to that country; but probably refers to the N. of Arabia Deserta, between Palestine, Idumea, and the Euphrates. So the Arabs still show in the Houran, a place called Uz, as the residence of Job.

**THE AGE WHEN JOB LIVED.**—*Eusebius* fixes it two ages before Moses; *i. e.*, about the time of Isaac: eighteen hundred years before Christ, and six hun-

## INTRODUCTION.

dred after the deluge. Agreeing with this are the following considerations:—1. Job's length of life is patriarchal, 200 years. 2. He alludes only to the earliest form of idolatry, viz., the worship of the sun, moon, and heavenly hosts (called *Saba*, whence arises the title *Lord of Sabaoth*, as opposed to Sabeanism,) (ch. 31. 26-28). 3. The number of oxen and rams sacrificed, *seven*, as in the case of Balaam. God would not have sanctioned this *after* the giving of the Mosaic law, though He might graciously accommodate Himself to existing customs *before* the law. 4. This language of Job is Hebrew, interspersed occasionally with Syriac and Arabic expressions, implying a time when all the Shemitic tribes spoke one common tongue and had not branched into different dialects, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic. 5. He speaks of the most ancient kind of writing, viz., sculpture. Riches also are reckoned by cattle. The Hebrew word, translated *a piece of money*, ought rather to be rendered *a lamb*. 6. There is no allusion to the exodus from Egypt and to the miracles that accompanied it; nor to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (*Patrick*, however, thinks that there is,); though there is to the flood (ch. 22. 15); and these events, happening in Job's vicinity, would have been striking illustrations of the argument for God's interposition in destroying the wicked and vindicating the righteous, had Job and his friends known of them. Nor is there any *undoubted* reference to the Jewish law, ritual, and priesthood. 7. The religion of Job is that which prevailed among the patriarchs previous to the law; sacrifices performed by the head of each family; no officiating priesthood, temple, or consecrated altar.

THE WRITER.—All the foregoing facts accord with Job himself having been the author. The style of thought, imagery, and manners are such as we should look for in the work of an Arabian emir. There is precisely that degree of knowledge of primitive tradition (see ch. 31. 33, as to Adam) which was universally spread abroad in the days of Noah and Abraham, and which was subsequently embodied in the early chapters of Genesis. Job, in his speeches, shows that he was much more competent to compose the work than Elihu, to whom *Lightfoot* attributes it. The style forbids its being attributed to Moses, to whom its composition is by some attributed, "whilst he was among the Madianites, about B. C. 1520." But the fact, that it, though not a Jewish book, appears among the Hebrew sacred writings, makes it likely that it came to the knowledge of Moses during the forty years which he passed in parts of Arabia, chiefly near Horeb; and that he, by Divine guidance, introduced it as a sacred writing to the Israelites, to whom, in their affliction, the patience and restoration of Job were calculated to be a lesson of special utility. That it is inspired appears from the fact that Paul (1 Cor. 3. 19) quotes it (Job, 5. 13,) with the formula, "It is written." Our Saviour, too (Mat. 24. 28), plainly refers to Job, 39:30. Cf. also Jam. 4. 10. and 1 Pet. 5. 6. with Job, 22. 29; Rom. 11. 34, 35, with Job, 15. 8. It is probably the oldest book in the world. It stands among the Hagiographa in the threefold division of Scripture into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa ("Psalms" Luke 24. 44).

DESIGN OF THE BOOK.—It is a public debate in poetic form on an important question concerning the divine government; moreover the prologue and epilogue, which are in prose, shed the interest of a living history over the debate, which would otherwise be but a contest of abstract reasonings. To each speaker of the three friends *three* speeches are assigned. Job having no one to stand by him is allowed to reply to each speech of each of the three. Eliphaz, as the eldest, leads the way. Zophar, at his *third* turn, failed to speak, thus virtually owning himself overcome (ch. 27.); and therefore Job continued his reply, which forms *three* speeches (chs. 26., 27., 28.; 29.-31). Elihu (ch. 32.-37.) is allowed *four* speeches. Jehovah makes three addresses (ch. 38.-41). Thus, throughout there is a tripartite division. The whole is divided into *three* parts—the prologue, poem proper, and epilogue. The *poem*, into three—1. The dispute of Job and his three friends; 2. The address of Elihu; 3. The address of God. There are *three* series in the controversy, and in the same order. The epilogue (ch. 42.) also is threefold; Job's justification, reconciliation with his friends, restoration. The speakers also in their successive speeches *regularly advance from less to greater vehemence*. With all this artificial composition, everything seems easy and natural.

The question to be solved, as exemplified in the case of Job, is, Why are the righteous afflicted consistently with God's Justice? The doctrine of retribution after death, no doubt, is the great solution of the difficulty. And to it Job plainly refers in ch. 14. 14, and ch. 19. 25. The objection to this, that the explicitness of the language on the resurrection in Job is inconsistent with the obscurity on the subject in the early books of the Old Testament, is answered by the fact, that Job enjoyed the divine vision (ch. 38. 1; 35. 5), and therefore, *by inspiration*, foretold these truths. Next, the revelations made outside of Israel being few

## INTRODUCTION.

needed to be the more explicit; thus Balaam's prophecy (Numbers 24. 17) was clear enough to lead the wise men *of the East* by the star (Matthew 2); and in the age before the written law, it was the more needful for God not to leave himself without witness of the truth. Still Job evidently did not fully realize the significance designed by the Spirit in his own words (cf. 1. Peter 1. 11, 12). The doctrine, though existing, was not *plainly* revealed or at least understood. Hence he does not *mainly* refer to this solution. Yes, and *even now*, we need something *in addition* to this solution. David, who firmly believed in a future retribution (Psalm 26. 10; 17. 15), still felt the difficulty not *entirely* solved thereby (Psalm 83). The solution is not in Job's or in his three friends' speeches. It must, therefore, be in Elihu's. God will hold a final judgment, no doubt, to clear up all that seems dark in his present dealings; but He also *now* providentially and morally governs the world *and all the events of human life*. Even the comparatively righteous are not without sin which needs to be corrected. The justice and love of God administer the altogether deserved and merciful correction. Affliction to the godly is thus mercy and justice in disguise. The afflicted believer on repentance sees this. "*Via crucis, via salutis.*" Though afflicted, the godly are happier *even now* than the ungodly, and when affliction has attained its end, it is removed by the Lord. In the Old Testament the consolations are more temporal and outward; in the New Testament, more spiritual; but in neither to the entire exclusion of the other. "Prosperity," says Bacon, "is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity that of the New Testament, which is the mark of God's more especial favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost has labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes." This solution of Elihu is seconded by the addresses of God, in which it is shown God *must* be just (because He *is* God), as Elihu has shown *how* God can be just, and yet the righteous be afflicted. It is also acquiesced in by Job, who makes no reply. God reprimands the three friends, but not Elihu. Job's general course is approved; he is directed to intercede for his friends, and is restored to double his former prosperity.

POETRY.—In all countries poetry is the earliest form of composition as being best retained in the memory, and in the East especially it was customary to preserve their sentiments in a terse, proverbial, and poetic form (called *maschal*). Hebrew poetry is not constituted by the rhythm or metre, but in a form peculiar to itself.—1. In an alphabetical arrangement somewhat like our acrostic. For instance, Lamentations 1. 2. The same verse repeated at intervals; as Psalms 42., 107. 3. Rhythm of gradation. *Psalms of degrees*, 120—134, in which the expression of the previous verse is resumed and carried forward in the next (Psalm 121). 4. The chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry is *parallelism*, or the correspondence of the same ideas in the parallel clauses. The earliest instance is in Enoch's prophecy (Jude 14), and Lamech's parody of it (Genesis 4. 23). Three kinds occur—(1.) The synonymous parallelism, in which the second is a repetition of the first, with or without increase of force (Psalm 22. 27; Isaiah 15. 1.); sometimes with double parallelism (Isaiah 1. 15). (2.) The antithetic, in which the idea of the second clause is the converse of that in the first (Proverbs 10. 1). (3.) The synthetic, where there is a correspondence between different propositions, noun answering to noun, verb to verb, member to member, the sentiment, moreover, being not merely echoed, or put in contrast, but enforced by accessory ideas (Job 3. 3—9). Also *alternate* (Isaiah 51. 19). "Desolation and destruction, famine and sword," *i. e.*, desolation by famine, and destruction by the sword *Introverted*; where the fourth answers to the first, and the third to the second (Matthew 7. 6). Parallelism thus often affords a key to the interpretation. For fuller information, see Lowth (Introduction to Isaiah, and lecture on Hebrew Poetry) and Spirit of Hebrew Poetry by Herder, *translated* by Marsh. The simpler and less artificial forms of parallelism prevail in Job—a mark of its early age.

# THE BOOK OF

# JOB.

## CHAPTER I.

### PART I.—PROLOGUE OR HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION IN PROSE— CHAPTERS I., II.

**Ver. 1-5.** THE HOLINESS OF JOB, HIS WEALTH, ETC. 1. **Uz**—North of Arabia Deserta, lying towards the Euphrates; it was in this neighbourhood, and not in that of Idumea, that the Chaldeans and Sabeans who plundered him dwelt. The Arabs divide their country into the North, called *Sham*, or “the left:” and the South, called Yemen, or “the right:” for they faced East, and so the West was on their left, and the South on their right. Arabia Deserta was on the East, Arabia Petræa on the West, and Arabia Felix on the South. **Job**—The name comes from an Arabic word meaning *to return*, viz., to God, *to repent*, referring to his end: [EICHORN] or rather from a Hebrew word signifying one to whom *enmity* was shown, *greatly tried*. [GESENIUS.] Significant names were often given among the Hebrews, from some event of the after life (cf. Isaiah, 8. 18; Genesis, 4. 2, Abel—a feeder of sheep.) So the emir of Uz was by general consent called *Job*, on account of his *trials*. The only other person so called was a son of Issachar (Genesis, 46. 13). **perfect**—Not absolute or faultless perfection (cf. 9. 20; Ecclesiastes, 7. 20), but *integrity*, *sincerity*, and *consistency* on the whole, in all relations of life (Genesis, 6. 9; 17. 1; Proverbs, 10. 9; Matthew, 5. 48). It was the *fear of God* that kept Job from *evil* (Proverbs, 8. 13). 3. **she asses**—Prized on account of their milk, and for riding (Judges, 5. 10). Houses and lands are not mentioned among the emir’s wealth, as nomadic tribes dwell in movable tents and live chiefly by pasture, the right to the soil not being appropriated by individuals. The “five hundred yoke of oxen” imply, however, that Job tilled the soil. He seems also to have had a dwelling in a town, in which respect he differed from the patriarchs. Camels are well called *ships of the desert*, especially valuable for caravans, as being able to lay in a store of water that suffices them for days, and sustaining life on a very few thistles or thorns. **household**—(Genesis, 26. 14). The other rendering which the Hebrew admits, *husbandry*, is not so probable. **men of the east**—Denoting in Scripture those living east of Palestine; as the people of North Arabia Deserta (Judges, 6. 3; Ezekiel, 25. 4). 4. **every one his day**—viz., the birthday (ch. 3. 1). Implying the love and harmony of the members of the family, as contrasted with the ruin which soon broke up such a scene of happiness. The *sisters* are specified, as these feasts were not for revelry, which

would be inconsistent with the presence of sisters. These latter were invited by the brothers, though they gave no invitations in return. 5. **when the days of feasting were gone about** — *i.e.*, at the end of all the birthdays collectively, when the banquets had gone round through all the families. **Job sanctified them** — By offering up as many expiatory burnt-offerings as he had sons (Leviticus, I. 4). This was done *in the morning* (Genesis, 22. 3; Leviticus, 6. 12). So Jesus began devotions early (Mark, I. 35). The holocaust, or burnt-offering, in patriarchal times, was offered (*lit.*, *caused to ascend*, referring to the smoke ascending to heaven), by each father of a family officiating as priest in behalf of his household. **cursed God** — The same Hebrew word means to *curse*, and to *bless*; GESENIUS says, the original sense is to *kneel*, and thus it came to mean bending the knee in order to *invoke* either a blessing or a curse. Cursing is a perversion of blessing, as all sin is of goodness. Sin is a degeneracy, not a generation. It is not, however, likely that Job should fear the possibility of his sons *cursing* God. The sense *bid farewell to*, derived from the *blessing* customary at parting, seems sufficient (Genesis, 47. 10). Thus UMBREIT translates "may have dismissed God from their hearts;" *viz.*, amidst the intoxication of pleasure (Proverbs, 20. 1). This act illustrates Job's "fear of God," *v. I.*

6-12. SATAN, APPEARING BEFORE GOD, FALSELY ACCUSES JOB. 6. **sons of God** — Angels (ch. 38. 7; I Kings, 22. 19). They present themselves to render account of their "ministry" in other parts of the universe (Hebrews, I. 14). **the Lord** — *Heb.*, JEHOVAH — the self-existing God, faithful to His promises. God says (Exodus, 6. 3) that He was not known to the patriarchs by this name. But, as the *name* occurs previously in Genesis, 2. 7-9, etc., what must be meant is, not until the time of delivering Israel by Moses was He known peculiarly and publicly in the *character* which the name means, *viz.*, *making things to be*, fulfilling the promises made to their forefathers. This name, therefore, here is no objection against the antiquity of the book of Job. **Satan** — The tradition was widely spread that *he* had been the agent in Adam's temptation. Hence his name is given without comment. The feeling with which he looks on Job is similar to that with which he looked on Adam in Paradise: emboldened by his success in the case of one not yet fallen, he is confident that the piety of Job, one of a fallen race, will not stand the test. He had fallen himself (ch. 4. 19; 15. 15; Jude, 6). In the book of Job first Satan is designated by *name*: *Satan*, in Hebrew, one who lies in wait; an *Adversary* in a court of justice (I Chronicles, 21. 1; Psalm 109. 6; Zechariah, 3. 1). *The accuser* (Revelation, 12. 10). He has got the law of God on his side by man's sin, and against man. But Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law for us; justice is once more on man's side against Satan (Isaiah, 42. 21); and so Jesus Christ can plead as our *Advocate* against the *adversary* (Romans, 8. 33). *Devil* is the Greek name—the *slanderer*, or *accuser*. He is subject to God, who uses his ministry for chastising man. In Arabic, *Satan* is often applied to a *serpent* (Genesis, 3. 1). He is called Prince of this world (John, 12. 31); the God of this world (2 Corinthians, 4. 4); Prince of the power of the air (Ephesians, 2. 2). God here questions him, in order to vindicate His own ways before angels. 7. **going to and fro** — Rather, *hurrying rapidly to and fro*. The original idea in Arabic is the

heat of haste (1 Peter, 5, 8; Matthew, 12, 43). Satan seems to have had some peculiar connection with this earth. Perhaps he was formerly its ruler under God. Man succeeded to the vice-royalty (Genesis, 1, 26; Psalm 8, 6). Man lost it, and Satan became Prince of this world. The Son of man (Psalm 8, 4), the representative man, regains the forfeited inheritance (Revelation, 11, 15). Satan's replies are characteristically curt and short. When the angels appear before God, Satan is among them, even as there was a Judas among the Apostles. 8. **considered**—*Marg., set thine heart on; i.e., considered attentively.* No true servant of God escapes the eye of the Adversary of God. 9. **fear God for naught**—It is a mark of the children of Satan to sneer and not give credit to any for disinterested piety. Not so much God's gifts, as God Himself is "the reward" of His people (Genesis, 15, 1). 10. **his substance is increased**—*Lit., spread out like a flood:* Job's herds covered the face of the country. 11. **curse thee to thy face**—In antithesis to God's praise of him (v. 8), "one that feareth God." Satan's words are too true of many. Take away their prosperity and you take away their religion (Malachi, 3, 14). 12. **in thy power**—Satan has no power against man till God gives it. God would not touch Job with His own hand, though Satan asks this (v. 11, *thine*), but *allows* the enemy to do so.

13-22. JOB, IN AFFLICTION, BLESSES GOD, ETC. 13. **wine**—Not specified in verse 4. The mirth inspired by the *wine* here contrasts the more sadly with the alarm which interrupted it. 14. **the asses feeding beside them**—*Heb., she-asses.* A graphic picture of rural repose and peace; the more dreadful, therefore, by contrast is the sudden attack of the plundering Arabs. 15. **Sabeans**—Not those of Arabia Felix, but those of Arabia Deserta, descending from Sheba, grandson of Abraham and Keturah (Genesis, 25, 3). The Bedouin Arabs of the present day resemble, in marauding habits, these Sabeans (cf. Genesis, 16, 12). **I alone am escaped**—Cunningly contrived by Satan. One in each case escapes (v. 16, 17, 19), and brings the same kind of message. This was to *overwhelm* Job, and leave him no time to recover from the rapid succession of calamities—"misfortunes seldom come single." 16. **fire of God**—Hebraism for *a mighty fire*; as *cedars of God*—*lofty cedars.* Not *lightning*, which would not consume *all* the sheep and servants. UMBREIT understands it of *the burning wind* of Arabia, called by the Turks "wind of poison." "The Prince of the power of the air" is permitted to have control over such destructive agents. 17. **Chaldeans**—Not merely robbers as the Sabeans; but experienced in war, as is implied by "they *set in array* three bands" (Habakkuk, 1, 6-8). RAWLINSON distinguishes three periods: 1. When their seat of empire was in the South, towards the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. The Chaldean period, from 2300 B.C. to 1500 B.C. In this period was Chedorlaomer (Genesis, 14.), the Kudur of Hur or Ur of the Chaldees, in the Assyrian inscriptions, and the conqueror of Syria. 2. From 1500 to 625 B.C., the Assyrian period. 3. From 625 to 538 B.C. (when Cyrus the Persian took Babylon), the Babylonian period. Chaldees in Hebrew—*Chasdism.* They were akin, perhaps, to the Hebrews, as Abraham's sojourn in Ur, and the name *Chesed*, a nephew of Abraham, imply. The *three* bands were probably in order to attack the

three separate thousands of Job's camels (*v.* 3). 19. **wind from the wilderness**—South of Job's house. The tornado came the more violently over the desert as being uninterrupted (Isaiah, 21. 1; Hosea, 13. 15). **the young men**—Rather, *the young people*; including the daughters (so in Ruth, 2. 21). 20. **Job arose**—Not necessarily *from sitting*. *Inward excitement* is implied, and the *beginning* to do any thing. He had heard the other messages calmly, but on hearing of the death of his children, *then* he arose; or, as [EICHORN] translates, he *started up* (2 Samuel, 13. 31). The rending of the mantle was the conventional mark of deep grief (Genesis, 37. 34). Orientals wear a tunic or shirt and loose pantaloons: and over these a flowing mantle (especially great persons and women). Shaving the head was also usual in grief (Jeremiah, 41. 5; Micah, 1. 16). 21. **naked**—(1 Timothy, 6. 7). "Mother's womb" is poetically the earth, the universal mother (Ecclesiastes, 5. 15; 12. 7; Psalm 139. 15). Job herein realizes God's assertion (*v.* 8) against Satan's (*v.* 11). Instead of *cursing*, he *blesses* the name of JEHOVAH (the Hebrew). The *name* of Jehovah is Jehovah *Himself*, as manifested to us in His attributes (Isaiah, 9. 6). 22. **nor charged God foolishly**—Rather, *allowed himself to commit no folly against God*. [UMBREIT.] Chapter 2. 10 proves that this is the meaning. Not as marg. *attributed no folly to God*. Hasty words against God, though natural in the bitterness of grief, are *folly*; *lit.*, an *insipid, unsavoury* thing (ch. 6. 6; Jeremiah, 23. 13, Margin). *Folly* in Scripture is continually equivalent to *wickedness*. For when man sins, it is himself, not God, whom he injures (Proverbs, 8. 36). We are to submit to trials, not because we see the *reasons* for them, nor yet as though they were matters of *chance*, but because *God wills* them, and has a *right* to send them, and has *His own* good reasons in sending them.

## CHAPTER II.

**Ver. 1-9.** SATAN FURTHER TEMPTS JOB. 1. **a day**—Appointed for the angels giving an account of their ministry to God. The words *to present himself before the Lord* occur here, though not in 1. 6, as Satan has now a special report to make as to Job. 3. **integrity**—*lit.*, *completeness*; so "perfect," another form of the same *Heb.* word, ch. 11. **movedst... against**—So 1 Samuel, 26. 19; cf. 1 Chronicles, 21. 1, with 2 Samuel, 24. 1. 4. **skin for skin**—A proverb. Supply, *He will give*. *The skin* is figurative for *any outward good*. Nothing outward is so dear that a man will not exchange it for some other outward good; *but (not yea) life*, the inward good, cannot be replaced, a man will sacrifice everything else for its sake. Satan sneers bitterly at man's egotism, and says Job bears the loss of property and children because these are mere *outward and exchangeable* goods, but he will give up all things, even his religion, in order to save his life, if you touch his bones and flesh. *Skin* and *life* are in antithesis. [UMBREIT.] The martyrs prove Satan's sneer false. ROSENMULLER explains it not so well, A man willingly gives up *another's skin* (life) for *his own skin* (life). So Job might bear the loss of his children, etc., with equanimity so long as he remained unhurt himself; but, when touched in his own person, he



would renounce God. Thus the first "skin" means the *other's* skin, *i.e.*, body; the second "skin" *one's own*, as in Exodus, 21. 23. 6. **but save** — Rather, *only spare*. Satan shows his ingenuity in inflicting pain, and also his knowledge of what man's body can bear without inflicting vital injury. 7. **sore boils** — Malignant boils. Rather, as it is singular in the *Hebrew*, a *burning sore*. Job was covered with *one universal inflammation*. The use of the potsherd agrees with this view. It was that form of leprosy called *black* (to distinguish it from the *white*) or *Elephantiasis*, because the feet swell like those of the elephant. The Arabic *judham* (Deuteronomy, 28. 35), where *sore botch* is rather the *black burning boil* (Isaiah, 1. 6). 8. **a potsherd** — Not a piece of a broken earthen vessel, but an instrument made for scratching (the root of the *Hebrew* word is *scratch*); the sore was too disgusting to touch. "To sit in the ashes" marks the deepest mourning (Jonah, 3. 6); also humility, as if the mourner were nothing but *dust and ashes*, so Abraham (Genesis, 18. 27).

9-13. **JOB REPROVES HIS WIFE.** 9. **curse God** — Rather, *renounce* God. Note 1. 5. [UMBREIT.] However, it was usual among the heathens, when disappointed in their prayers accompanied with offerings to their gods, to reproach and *curse* them. **and die** — *i.e.*, take thy farewell of God and so die. For no good is to be got out of religion either here or hereafter; or, at least, not in this life. [GILL.] Nothing makes the ungodly so angry as to see the godly under trial not angry. 10. **the foolish women** — *Sin* and *folly* are allied in Scripture (1 Samuel, 25. 25; 2 Samuel, 13. 13; Psalm 14. 1). **receive evil** — Bear willingly (Lamentations, 3. 39). 11. **Eliphaz** — The view of RAWLINSON that "the names of Job's three friends represent the Chaldean times, about 700 B.C.," cannot be accepted. Eliphaz is an Idumean name, Esau's eldest son (Genesis, 36. 4); and Teman, son of Eliphaz (15), called "duke." EUSEBIUS places Teman in Arabia Petraea (but see Note 6. 19). *Teman* means *at the right hand*; and then the South, *viz.*, part of Idumea; capital of Edom (Amos, 1. 12). Hebrew geographers faced the East, not the North as we do; hence with them *the right hand* was the South. Temanites were famed for wisdom (Jer., 49. 7). BARUCH mentions them as "authors of fables (*viz.*, proverbs embodying the results of observation) and searchers out of understanding." **Bildad the Shuhite** — Shuah (a pit), son of Abraham and Keturah (Genesis, 25. 2). PTOLEMY mentions the region Syceea, in Arabia Deserta, East of Batanea. **Zophar the Naamathite** — Not of the Naamans in Judah (Joshua, 15. 41), which was too distant; but some region in Arabia Deserta. FRETILIUS says there was a Naamath in Uz. 12. **toward heaven** — They threw violently ashes upwards, that they might fall on their heads and cover them. The deepest mourning (Joshua, 7. 6; Acts, 22. 23). 13. **seven days . . . nights** — They did not remain in the one posture and without food, etc., all this time, but for the most of this period daily and nightly. Sitting on the earth marked mourning (Lamentations, 2. 10). Seven days was the usual length of it (Genesis, 50. 10; 1 Samuel, 31. 13). This silence may have been due to a rising suspicion of evil in Job; but chiefly because it is only ordinary griefs that find vent in language; extraordinary griefs are too great for utterance.

## CHAPTER III.

THE POEM OR DEBATE ITSELF, 2.-42. 6; FIRST SERIES IN IT, 3.-14; JOB FIRST 3.

**Ver. 1-19.** JOB CURSES THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH, AND WISHES FOR DEATH. 1. **opened his mouth**—The Orientals speak seldom, and then sententiously. Hence this formula expressing deliberation and gravity (Psalm 78. 2). *Formally began.* **cursed his day**—The strict *Hebrew* word for *cursing*; not the same as in ch. 1. 5. Job cursed his birth-day, but not his God. 2. **spake**—*Hebrew answered, i.e.,* not to any actual question that preceded, but to the question virtually involved in the case. His outburst is singularly wild and bold (Jeremiah, 20. 14). To desire to die so as to be free from sin is a mark of grace; to desire to die so as to escape troubles is a mark of corruption. He was ill fitted to die, who was so unwilling to live. But his trials were greater, and his light less, than ours. 3. **the night in which**—Rather “the night which said.” The words in *Italics* are not in the *Hebrew*. Night is personified and poetically made to speak. So in *v. 7.* and Psalm 19. 2. The birth of a male in the East is a matter of joy; often not so, of a female. 4. **let not God regard it**—Rather, more poetically. *Seek it out.* “Let not God stoop from His bright throne to raise it up from its dark hiding-place.” The curse on *the day* in *v. 3.* is amplified in *v. 4. 5;* that on *the night*, in *v. 6-10.* 5. **let the shadow of death**—(deepest darkness, Isaiah, 9. 2). —**stain it**—This is a later sense of the verb, [GESENIUS,] better the old and more poetic idea, “Let darkness (the ancient night of chaotic gloom) resume its rights over light (Genesis, 1. 2), and *claim* that day as its own.” **a cloud**—Collectively, *a gathered mass of dark clouds.* **the blackness of the day terrify it**—*lit., the obscurations;* whatever darkens the day. [GESENIUS.] The verb in *Hebrew* expresses *sudden terrifying.* May it be suddenly affrighted at its own darkness. UMBREIT explains it of *magical incantations that darken the day,* forming the climax to the previous causes; *v. 8* speaks of *curser of the day* similarly. But the former view is simpler. Others refer it to the poisonous Simoom wind. 6. **seize upon it**—As its prey; *i.e.,* utterly dissolve it. **joined unto the days of the year**—Rather, by poetic personification, “Let it not *rejoice* in the circle of days and nights, and months, which form the circle of years.” 7. **solitary**—Rather, *unfruitful.* “Would that it had not *given birth* to me.” 8. **them...that curse the day**—If *mourning* be the right rendering in the latter clause of this verse, these words refer to the hired mourners of the dead (Jeremiah, 9. 17). But the *Hebrew* for *mourning* elsewhere, always denotes *an animal*, whether it be the *crocodile* or some huge *serpent* (Isaiah, 27. 1.) that is meant by *leviathan*. Therefore, the expression, *curser of day,* refers to magicians who were believed to be able by charms to make a day one of evilomen. So Balaam, Numbers, 22. 5. This accords with UMBREIT’S view (*v. 7*); or, to the Ethiopians and Atlantes who “used to curse the sun at his rising for burning up them and their country.” [HERODOTUS.] Necro-

mancers claimed power to control or rouse wild beasts at will; as the Indian serpent-charms at this day (Psalm 28. 5). Job does not say they had the power they claimed; but, supposing they had, may they curse the day. SCHUTTENS renders it by supplying words (?) Let those that are ready *for anything, call it* (the day) the raiser up of leviathan, *i.e., of a host of evils.* 9. **dawning of the day** — *lit., eyelashes of morning.* The Arab poets call the *sun* the *eye* of day. His early rays, therefore, breaking forth before sunrise, are the opening *eyelids* or *eyelashes* of morning. 12. **why did the knees prevent me?** — Old English for *anticipate* my wants. The reference is to the solemn recognition of a new-born child by the father, who used to place it on his knees as his own, whom he was bound to rear (Genesis, 30. 3: 50. 23; Isaiah, 66. 12). 13. **lain . . . quiet . . . slept** — A gradation. I should not only have *lain*, but been *quiet*, and not only *been quiet*, but *slept*. Death in Scripture is called *sleep* (Psalm 13. 3); especially in the New Testament, where the Resurrection-awaking is more clearly set forth (1 Corinthians, 15. 51; Thessalonians, 4. 14; 5. 10.). 14. **With kings . . . which built desolate places for themselves** — Who built up for themselves what proved to be (not *palaces*, but) *ruins!* The wounded spirit of Job, once a great emir himself, sick of the vain struggles of mortal great men after grandeur contemplates the *palaces* of kings, now *desolate heaps of ruins*. His regarding the repose of death the most desirable end of the great ones of the earth, wearied with heaping up perishable treasures, marks the irony that breaks out from the black clouds of melancholy. [UMBREIT]. The *for themselves* marks their *selfishness*. MICHAELIS explains that weakly of *mauseleums*, such as are found still, of stupendous proportions, in the ruins of Petra of Idumea. 15. **filled their houses with silver** — Some take this of the treasures which the ancients used to bury with their dead. But see last verse. 16. **untimely birth** — (Psalm 58. 8). Preferable to the life of the restless miser (Ecclesiastes, 6. 3-5) 17. **the wicked** — The original meaning, *those ever restless, full of desires* (Isaiah, 57. 20, 21). **weary** — *lit., those whose strength is wearied out* (Revelation, 14. 13). 18. **There the prisoners rest** — From their chains. 19. **servant** — The *slave* is there *manumitted* from slavery.

#### 20-26. HE COMPLAINS OF LIFE BECAUSE OF HIS ANGUISH. 20.

**Wherefore giveth he light** — *viz., God.* Often omitted reverentially (ch. 24. 23; Ecclesiastes, 9. 9). Light, *i.e., life.* The joyful light ill suits the mourner. The grave is most in unison with their feelings. 23. **whose way is hid** — The picture of Job is drawn from a wanderer who has *lost his way*, and who is hedged in, so as to have no exit of escape (Hosea, 2. 6; Lamentations, 3. 7, 9). 24. **my sighing cometh before I eat** — *i.e., prevents my eating.* [UMBREIT.] Or, conscious that the effort to eat brought on the disease, Job must sigh before eating. [ROSENMULER.] Or, sighing takes the place of good (Psalm 42. 3). [GOOD.] But the first explanation accords best with the text. **my roaring is poured out like the waters** — An image from the rushing sound of water streaming. 25. **the thing which I . . . feared is come upon me** — In the beginning of his trials, when he heard of the loss of one blessing, he feared the loss of another, and when he heard of the loss of that, he feared the loss of a third. **that which I was afraid of is come unto me** — *viz., the ill-opinion of his friends, as though he were a hypocrite on*

account of his trials. 26. **I was not in safety. . . yet trouble came** — Referring, not to his former state, but to the *beginning* of his troubles. From that time *I had no rest*, there was *no intermission* of sorrows. And (not *yet*,) a fresh trouble is coming, *viz.*, my friends' suspicion of my being a hypocrite. This gives the starting point to the whole ensuing controversy.

## CHAPTER IV.

VER. 1-21. FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ. **Eliphaz** — The mildest of Job's three accusers. The greatness of Job's calamities, and his complaint against God, and the opinion that calamities are proofs of guilt, led the three to doubt Job's integrity. 2. **If we assay to commune** — Rather, two questions, "May we attempt a word with thee? Wilt thou be grieved at it?" Even pious friends often count that only a touch which we feel as a wound. 3. **weak hands** — (Isaiah, 35. 3; 2 Samuel, 4. 1.) 5. **thou art troubled** — Rather, *unhinged*, hast lost thy self-command (1 Thessalonians, 3. 3). 6. **Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, etc.** — Does thy fear, thy confidence, etc., come to nothing? Does it come only to this, that thou faintest now? Rather, by transposition, "Is not thy fear (of God) thy hope? and the uprightness of thy ways, thy confidence? If so, bethink thee, who ever perished, being innocent?" [UMBREIT.] But Luke, 13. 2, 3, shows that, though there *is* a retributive divine government even in this life, yet *we* cannot judge by the mere outward *appearance*. "One event is outwardly to the righteous and to the wicked" (Ecclesiastes, 9. 2); but yet we must *take it on trust*, that God deals righteously *even now* (Psalm 37. 25; Isaiah, 33. 16). Judge not by *a part*, but by *the whole* of a godly man's life, and by *his end*, even here (James, 5. 11). The one and the same outward event is altogether a different thing in its inward bearings on the godly and ungodly even here. Even prosperity, much more calamity, is a *punishment* to the wicked (Proverbs, 1. 32). Trials are *chastisements* for their good (to the righteous.) (Psalm 119.; 67.; 71.; 75). See Preface on the *Design* of this book. 8. **they that plow iniquity. . . reap the same** — (Proverbs, 22. 8; Hosea, 8. 7; 10. 13; Galatians, 6. 7, 8). 9. **breath of his nostrils** — God's anger. A figure from the fiery winds of the East (ch. 1. 16; Isaiah, 5. 25; Psalm 18. 8, 15). 10. **lion** — *i.e.*, Wicked men, upon whom Eliphaz wished to show that calamities come in spite of their various resources, just as destruction comes on the lion in spite of his strength (Psalm 58. 6; 2 Timothy, 4. 17). Five *different* Hebrew terms here occur for *lion*. The raging of *the lion (the tearer)*, and the roaring of *the bellowing lion*, and the teeth of *the young lions*, not *whelps*, but grown up enough to hunt for prey. The *strong lion*, (*English Version, old*), etc., the *whelps of the lioness* (not *the stout lion* as *English Version*), [BARNES and UMBREIT.] The various phases of wickedness are expressed by this variety of terms; obliquely, Job, his wife, and children may be hinted at by the lion, lioness, and whelps. The one verb, *are broken*, does not suit both subjects: therefore, supply "the roaring of the bellowing lion *is silenced*." The *strong lion* dies of want at last, and the *whelps*, torn from the mother, are scattered; and

the race becomes extinct. 12. **a thing**—Hebrew, *a word*, Eliphaz confirms his view by a divine *declaration* which *was secretly and unexpectedly imparted* to him. **a little**—*lit., a whisper*. Implying the still silence around, and that more was conveyed than articulate words could utter (ch. 26. 14; 2 Corinthians, 12. 4). 13. **in thoughts from the visions**—[So WINER and *English Version*.] Whilst revolving night *visions previously made* to him (Daniel, 2. 29). Rather, “In my manifold (Hebrew, *divided*) thoughts, *before* the visions of the night commenced;” therefore not a delusive dream (Psalm 4. 4). [UMBREIT.] **deep sleep**—(Genesis, 2. 21; 15. 12). 16. **it stood still**—At first the apparition glides *before* Eliphaz, then stands still, but with that shadowy indistinctness of form which creates such an impression of awe; a gentle murmur! not (*English Version*): *there was silence*: For in 1 Kings, 19. 12, the voice, as opposed to the previous storm, denotes a *gentle still murmur*. 17. **mortal man . . . a man**—*Two Hebrew words for man* are used; the first implying his *feebleness*; the second his *strength*. Whether feeble or strong, man is not righteous *before* God. 17. **more just than God . . . more pure than his Maker**—But this would be self-evident without an oracle. 18. **folly**—*Imperfection* is to be *attributed* to the angels, in comparison with *Him*. The holiness of some of them had given way (2 Peter, 2. 4), and at best is but the holiness of a *creature*. Folly is the want of *moral* consideration. [UMBREIT.] 19. **houses of clay**—(2 Corinthians, 5. 1). Houses made of sun-dried clay bricks are common in the East; they are easily washed away (Matthew, 7. 27). Man's *foundation* is this dust (Genesis, 3. 19). **before the moth**—Rather, *as before the moth*, which devours a garment (ch. 13. 28; Psalm 39. 11; Isaiah, 50. 9). Man, who cannot, in a physical point of view, stand *before the very moth*, surely cannot, in a moral, stand *before God*. 20. **from morning to evening**—Unceasingly; or, better, *between the morning and evening of one short day* (so Exodus, 18. 14; Isaiah, 38. 12). “They are destroyed;” better, “they *would be* destroyed,” if God withdrew His loving protection. Therefore man must not think to be *holy before God*, but to draw holiness, and all things else, *from God* (v. 17). 21. **Their excellency**—(Psalm 39. 11; 146. 4; 1 Corinthians, 13. 8). But UMBREIT, by an Oriental image from a bow useless, because *unstrung*. “*Their nerve or string would be torn away*,” MICHAELIS better, in accordance with v. 19, makes the allusion be to *the cords* of a tabernacle taken down (Isaiah, 33. 20). **they die, even without wisdom**—Rather, “They would perish, yet not according to wisdom,” but according to arbitrary choice, if God were not infinitely wise and holy. The design of the spirit is to show that the continued existence of weak man proves the inconceivable wisdom and holiness of God, which alone save man from ruin. [UMBREIT.] BENJEL shows from Scripture, that God's *holiness* (Hebrew *Kadosh*), comprehends all his excellencies and attributes. DE WETTE loses the scope in explaining it, of the *shortness* of man's life contrasted with the an<sup>σ</sup> “before they have attained to wisdom.”

## CHAPTER V.

**Ver. 1-27. ELIPHAZ' CONCLUSION FROM THE VISION.** 1. **If there be any, etc.**—Rather, Will He (God) reply to thee? Job, after the revelation just given, cannot be so presumptuous as to think, God or *any of the holy ones* (Daniel, 4. 17; angels) round His throne, will vouchsafe a *reply* (a judicial expression) to his rebellious complaint. 2. **wrath** . . . **envy**—Fretful and passionate complaints; such as Eliphaz charged Job with (ch. 4. 5; so Proverbs, 14. 30). Not, the wrath of *God* killeth the foolish, and *His* envy, etc. 3. **the foolish**—The wicked. I have seen the sinner spread his *roots* wide in prosperity, yet circumstances *suddenly* occurred which gave occasion for his once prosperous dwelling being *curse*d as desolate (Psalm 37. 35, 36; Jeremiah, 17. 8). 4. **his children** . . . **crushed in the gate**—A judicial formula. The gate was the place of judgment, and of other public proceedings, Psalm 127. 5; Proverbs, 22. 22; Genesis, 23. 10; Deuteronomy, 21. 19). Such propylæa have been found in the Assyrian remains. Eliphaz obliquely alludes to the calamity which cut off Job's children. 5. **even out of the thorns**—Even when part of the grain remains hanging on the thorn bushes (or, is *growing among thorns*, Matthew, 13. 7), the hungry gleaner does not grudge the trouble of taking even it away, so clean swept away is the harvest of the wicked. **the robber**—As the Sabeans, who robbed Job. Rather translate, *the thirsty*, as the antithesis in the parallelism, *the hungry*, proves. 6. **Although**—Rather, for truly. [UMBREIT.] **affliction cometh not forth of the dust**—Like a weed, of its own accord. Eliphaz hints that the cause of it lay with Job himself. 7. **Yet**—Rather, *Truly*, or, *But* Affliction does *not* come from chance; *but* is the appointment of God for sin, *i.e.*, the original birth-sin of man. Eliphaz passes from the particular sin and consequent suffering of Job to the universal sin and suffering of mankind. Troubles spring from man's common sin by as necessary a law of natural consequences as *sparks*, (Hebrew, *sons of coal*), fly upward. *Troubles* are *many* and *fiery*, as sparks (1 Peter, 4. 12; Isaiah, 43. 2). UMBREIT for *sparks* has *birds of prey*; *lit.*, *sons of lightning*, not so well. 8. **Therefore**, as affliction is ordered by God, on account of sin, *I would* have you to *seek unto God* (Isaiah, 8. 19; Amos, 5. 8; Jeremiah, 5. 24). II. Connected with v. 9. His *unsearchable* dealings are with a view to raise the *humble* (and abase the proud.), Luke, 1. 52. Therefore Job ought to turn humbly to Him. 12. **enterprise**—*lit.*, *realization*. The Hebrew combines in the one word the two ideas, *wisdom* and *happiness, enduring existence* being the etymological and philosophical root of the combined notion. [UMBREIT.] 13. **Paul**—(1 Corinthians, 3. 19) quoted this clause with the formula establishing its inspiration, *it is written*. He cites the exact *Hebrew* words, not as he usually does the LXX. *Greek* version (Psalm 9. 15). Haman was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai (Esther, 5. 14; 7. 10). The wise—the *cunning*. **is carried headlong**—Their scheme is precipitated before it is ripe. 14. Judicial blindness often is sent upon keen men of the world (Deuteronomy, 28. 29; 769

Isaiah, 59. 10; John, 9. 39). 15. *From the sword* which proceedeth *from their mouth* (Psalm 59. 7; 57. 4). 16. **the poor hath hope** — of the interposition of God. **iniquity stoppeth her mouth** — (Psalm 107. 42; Micah, 7. 9, 10; Isaiah, 52. 15). Especially at the last day, through shame (Jude, 15; Matthew, 22. 12). The *mouth* was the offender (*v.* 15), and the *mouth* shall then be stopped (Isaiah, 25. 8) at the end. 17. **happy** — Not the actual suffering is joyous; but the consideration of the *righteousness* of Him who sends it, and the *end* for which it is sent, make it a cause for thankfulness, not for complaints, such as Job had uttered (Hebrews, 12. 11). Eliphaz implies that the end in this case is to call back Job from the particular sin, of which he *takes for granted* that Job is guilty. Paul seems to allude to this passage in Hebrews, 12. 5; so James, 1. 12; Proverbs, 3. 12. Eliphaz does not give due prominence to this truth, but rather to *Job's sin*. It is Elihu alone (32.-37.) who fully dwells upon the truth, that affliction is mercy and justice in disguise, for the good of the sufferer. 18. **he maketh sore, and bindeth up** — (Deuteronomy, 32. 39; Hosea, 6. 1; Samuel, 2. 6). An image from *binding up* a wound. The healing art consisted much at that time in external applications. 19. **in six. . . yea, in seven** — (Proverbs, 6. 16; Amos, 1. 3). The Hebrew idiom fixes on a certain number (here *six*), in order to call attention as to a thing of importance; then increases the force by adding, with a *yea, nay even*, the next higher number, here *seven*, the sacred and perfect number. In *all* possible troubles; not merely in the precise number *seven*. 20. **power** — (Jeremiah, 5. 12). Hebrew, *hands*. **of the sword** — (Ezekiel, 35. 5) Margin, *Hands* are given to the sword personified as a living agent. 21. (Psalm 31. 20; Jeremiah, 18. 18). *Smite* (Psalm 73. 9). 22. **famine thou shalt laugh** — Not, in spite of destruction and famine, which is true (Habakkuk, 3. 17, 18), though not *the* truth meant by Eliphaz, but because *those calamities shall not come upon thee*. A different Hebrew word from that in *v.* 20; there, *famine in general*; here, *the languid state* of those wanting proper nutriment. [BARNES.] 23. **in leage with the stones of the field** — They shall not hurt the fertility of the soil; nor the wild beasts thy fruits. Spoken in Arabia Deserta, where stones abounded. *Arabia*, derived from *Arabah* — a desert plain. The first clause of this verse answers to the first clause of verse 22; and the last of this verse to the last of that verse. The full realization of this is yet future (Isaiah, 65. 23, 25; Hosea, 2. 18). 24. **know** — “Thou shalt rest in the assurance, that thine habitation is the abode of peace; and (if) thou numberest thine herd, thine expectations prove not fallacious.” [UMBREIT.] *Sim* does not agree with the context. The Hebrew word — *to miss* a mark, said of archers (Judges, 20. 16). The Hebrew for “habitation” primarily means *the fold for cattle*; and for “visit,” often *to take an account of, to number*. “Peace” is the common Eastern salutation; including *inward and outward prosperity*. 25. **as the grass** — (Psalm 72. 16). Properly, *herb bearing seed* (Genesis, 1. 11, 12). 26. **in full age** — So *full of days* (42. 17; Genesis, 35. 29). Not mere length of years, but *ripeness* for death, one's inward and outward full development not being prematurely cut short, is denoted. (Isaiah, 65. 22). *Thou shalt come*, not *lit.*, but expressing *willingness* to die. Eliphaz speaks from the Old Testament point of view, which made full years the reward of the righteous (Psalm

91. 16; Exodus, 20. 12), and premature death the lot of the wicked (Psalm 55. 23). The righteous are immortal till their work is done. To keep them longer would be to render them less fit to die. God takes them at their best (Isaiah, 57. 1). The good are compared to *wheat* (Matthew, 13. 30). **cometh in**—*lit., ascends*. The corn is *lifted up off the earth* and carried home; so the good man "Is raised unto the heap of sheaves." [UMBREIT.] 27. **Searched it...for thy good**—*lit., for thyself* (Psalm III. 2; Proverbs, 2. 4; 9. 12).

## CHAPTER VI.

## FIRST SERIES CONTINUED.

**Ver. 30.** REPLY OF JOB TO ELIPHAZ. 2. **thoroughly weighed**—Oh that, instead of censuring my complaints when thou oughtest rather to have sympathized with me, thou wouldest accurately compare together my *sorrow*, and my *misfortunes*: these latter *outweigh in the balance* the former. 3. **the sand**—(Proverbs, 27. 3) **are swallowed up**—See Margin. So Psalm 77. 4. But Job plainly is apologizing, not for not having had words *enough*, but for having spoken *too much and too boldly*: and the Hebrew is, *to speak rashly*. [EMBREIT, GESENIUS, ROSENMULLER.] "Thereunto were my words *so rash*." 4. **arrows... within me**—have *pierced* me. A poetic image representing the avenging Almighty armed with bow and arrows (Psalm 38. 2, 3). Here the arrows are poisoned. Peculiarly appropriate, in reference to *the burning pains* which penetrated, like poison, into *the inmost parts*—"spirit;" as contrasted with mere *surface flesh wounds*,) of Job's body. **set themselves in array**—A military image (Judges, 20. 33). All the terrors which the divine wrath can muster are set in array against me (Isaiah, 42. 13). 5. Neither wild animals, as the wild ass, nor tame, as the ox, are dissatisfied when well supplied with food. The braying of the one, and the lowing of the other, prove distress and want of palatable food. So, Job argues, if he complains, it is not without cause; viz., his pains, which are, as it were, *disgusting food*, which God feeds him with—end of verse 7. But he should have remembered a *rational* being should evince a better spirit than the *brute*. 6. **unsavoury**—Tasteless, insipid. *Salt* is a chief necessary of life to an Eastern, whose food is mostly vegetable. **the white**—*lit., spittle* (1 Samuel, 21. 13), which the white of an egg resembles. 7. To *touch* is contrasted with *meat*. "My *taste* refused *even to touch* it, and yet am I *fed* with such *meat* of sickness." The second clause *lit.*, is "Such is like the sickness, of my food." The natural taste abhors even to touch insipid food, and such forms my nourishment. For my sickness is like such nauseous food. [UMBREIT.] (Psalm 42. 3; 80. 5; 102. 9). No wonder, then, I complain. 8. To desire death is no necessary proof of fitness for death. The ungodly sometimes desire it, so as to escape troubles, without thought of the hereafter. The godly desire it, in order to be with the Lord; but they patiently wait God's will. 9. **destroy**—*lit., grind or crush* (Isaiah, 3. 15). **let loose his hand**—God had put forth His



hand only so far as to wound the *surface* of Job's flesh (ch. I. 12 ; 2. 6); he wishes that hand to be *let loose*, so as to wound *deeply and vitally*. **cut me off**—Metaphor from a weaver *cutting off* the web, when finished, from the thrum fastening it to the loom (Isaiah, 38. 12). 10. **I would harden myself**—Rather, "I would *exult* in the pain," if I knew that that pain would hasten my death. [GESENIUS.] UMBREIT translates the *Hebrew* of "Let Him not spare," *unsparing*; and joins it with *pain*. The *English Version* is more vivid. **concealed**—I have not disowned, in word or deed, the commands of the Holy One (Psalm 119. 46; Acts, 20. 20). He says this in answer to Eliphaz' insinuation that he is a hypocrite. God is here called *the Holy One*, to imply man's reciprocal obligation to be holy, as He is holy (Leviticus, 19. 2). 11. *What strength have I, so as to warrant the hope of restoration to health?* a hope which Eliphaz had suggested. *And what but a miserable end of life is before me, that I should desire to prolong life?* [UMBREIT.] UMBREIT and ROSENMULLER not so well translate the last words *to be patient*. 12. Disease had so attacked him, that his strength would need to be hard as *a stone*, and his flesh like *brass*, not to sink under it. But he has only flesh, like other men. It must, therefore, give way; so that the hope of restoration suggested by Eliphaz is vain (see Note, 5. 11). 13. **Is not my help in me?**—The interrogation is better omitted. "There is no help in me!" For "wisdom," *deliverance* is a better rendering. "And deliverance is driven quite from me." 14. **pity**—A proverb. *Chased is the love* which judges indulgently of our fellowmen: it is put on a par with *truth* in Proverbs, 3. 3, for they together form the essence of moral perfection. [UMBREIT.] It is the spirit of Christianity (1 Peter, 4. 8; 1 Corinthians, 13. 7; Proverbs, 10. 12; 17. 17). If it ought to be used towards all men, much more towards *friends*. *But he who does not use it forsaketh* (renounceth) *the fear of the Almighty* (James, 2. 13). 15. Those whom I regarded as *my brethren*, from whom I looked for faithfulness in my adversity, have disappointed me, as the streams failing from drought; wadys of Arabia, filled in the winter, but dry in the summer, which disappoint the caravans expecting to find water there. The fulness and noise of these temporary streams answers to the past large and loud professions of my friends; their dryness in summer, to the failure of their friendship when needed. The Arab proverb says of a treacherous friend, "I trust not in thy torrent" (Isaiah, 58. 11, *Margin*). **streams of brooks**—Rather, "*the brook in the ravines* which passes away." It has no perpetual spring of water to renew it (unlike "the fountain of *living* waters," Jeremiah, 2. 13; Isaiah, 33. 16, at the end,); and thus passes away as rapidly as it rose. 16. **blackish**—*lit.*, *Go as a mourner in black clothing* (Psalm 34. 14). A vivid and poetic image to picture the stream turbid and black with melted ice and snow, descending from the mountains into the valley. In the next clause, the snow dissolved, is, in the poet's view, *hid* in the flood. [UMBREIT.] 17. **wax warm**—Rather, "At the time when. (*But they soon,*) [UMBREIT.] *they become narrower*, (flow in a narrower bed), *they are silent*, (cease to flow noisily); in the heat (of the sun) they are consumed or vanish out of their place. First the stream flows more narrowly,—then becomes silent and still; at length every trace of water disappears by evaporation under the hot

sun." [UMBREIT.] 18. **turned aside** — Rather, *Caravans* (Hebrew, *travellers*), *turn aside from their way*, by circuitous routes, to obtain water. They had seen the brook in spring full of water: and now in the summer heat, on their weary journey, they turn off their road by a devious route to reach the living waters, which they remembered with such pleasure. But, when "they go," it is "*into a desert.*" [NOYES and UMBREIT.] Not as *English Version*, "They go to nothing," which would be a tame repetition of the drying up of the waters in *v.* 17; instead of waters, they find an "*empty wilderness;*" and, not having strength to regain their road, bitterly disappointed, *they perish*. The terse brevity is most expressive. 19. **the troops** — *i.e.*, *Caravans*. Tema north of Arabia Deserta, near the Syrian desert; called from Tema son of Ishmael (Genesis, 25. 15; Isaiah, 21. 14; Jeremiah, 25. 23). Still so called by the Arabs. Verses 19, 20, give another picture of the mortification of disappointed hopes: *viz.*, those of *the caravans on the direct road*, anxiously awaiting the return of their companions from the distant valley. The mention of the locality whence the caravans came gives living reality to the picture. *Sheba* refers here not to the marauders in North Arabia Deserta, (ch. 1. 15,) but to the *merchants* (Ezekiel, 27. 22,) in the South in Arabia Felix or Yemen, "afar off," (Jeremiah, 6. 20; Matthew, 12, 42; Genesis, 10. 28). Caravans are first mentioned, (Genesis, 37. 25); men needed to travel thus in companies across the desert, for defence against the roving robbers, and for mutual accommodation. "The companies waited for them," cannot refer to *the caravans who had gone in quest of the waters*: for *v.* 18 describes their utter destruction. 20. *lit.*, *each had hoped, viz.*, that their companions would find water. The greater had been their hopes the more bitter now their disappointment; *they came thither*, to the place, *and were ashamed; lit.*, their *countenances burn*, an oriental phrase for the shame and consternation of deceived expectation. So *ashamed* as to disappointment (Romans, 5. 5). 21. As the dried up brook is to the caravan, so are ye to me, *viz.*, a nothing; ye might as well not be in existence. [UMBREIT.] The Margin, *like to them or it, (viz.*, the waters of the brook,) is not so good a reading. **ye see, and are afraid** — Ye are struck aghast at the *sight* of my misery, and *ye lose presence of mind*. Job puts this mild construction on their failing to relieve him with affectionate consolation. 22. And yet I did not ask you to *bring me a gift*: or to *pay for me out of your substance a reward* (to the Judge, to redeem me from my punishment); all I asked from you was affectionate treatment. 23. **the mighty** — *The oppressor*, or creditor, in whose power the debtor was. [UMBREIT.] 24, 25. Irony. If you can *teach me the right view*, I am *willing to be set right and hold my tongue; and to be made to see my error*. But then if your words be really *the right words, how is it* that they are so *feeble*. "Yet how feeble are the words of what you call the right view." So the *Hebrew* is used in (Micah, 2. 10; 1. 9). The *English Version*, "How powerful," etc., does not agree so well with the last clause of the *v.* "And what will your arguings reprove?" *lit.*, "the reproofs which proceed from you;" the emphasis is on *you*; you may find fault, who are not in *my* situation. [UMBREIT.] 26. Do you imagine or *mean*, to reprove *words*, and (to reprove) the speeches of one *desperate*; (which are) as wind, mere nothings, not to be so narrowly taken to

task? UMBREIT not so well takes the *Hebrew* for *as wind*, "as sentiments;" making formal *sentiments* antithetical to mere *speeches*, and supplying, not the word "reprove," but "would you regard," from the first clause. 27. "Ye overwhelm;" *lit.*, *ye cause*, (supply, *your anger*) [UMBREIT,] *a net*, *viz.*, of sophistry, [NOYES and SCHUTTENS,] *to fall upon the desolate*, (one bereft of help, like *the fatherless orphan*); and *ye dig* (a pit) *for your friend*," *i.e.*, try to ensnare him, to catch him in the use of unguarded language [NOYES.] (Psalm 57. 6); metaphor from hunters catching wild beasts in a pit covered with brushwood to conceal it. UMBREIT from the Syriac, and answering to his interpretation of the first clause, has. "Would you be *indignant* against your friend?" The *Hebrew* in ch. 41. 6, means *feast upon*. As the first clause asks, "Would you *catch him in a net*?" so this follows up the image, "And would you next *feast upon him*, and his miseries?" So LXX. 28. **be content**—Rather, *be pleased to*,—look. Since you have so falsely judged my words, *look upon me*, *i.e.*, upon my countenance: *for* (it is *evident* before your faces) *if I lie*; my countenance will betray me, if I be the hypocrite that you suppose. 29. **Return**—Rather, *retract* your charges: "Let it not be iniquity;" *i.e.*, (retract) *that injustice may not be done me*. Yea retract, "my righteousness is in it," *i.e.*, my right is involved in this matter. 30. *Will you say that my guilt lies in the organ of speech*, and will you call it to account? or *is it that my taste* (palate,) or *discernment is not capable to form a judgment of perverse things*? Is it thus you will explain the fact of my having no consciousness of guilt? [UMBREIT.]

## CHAPTER VII.

**Ver. 1-21. JOB EXCUSES HIS DESIRE FOR DEATH. 1. appointed time**—Better, *warfare*, hard conflict with evils; (so in Isaiah, 40. 2; Daniel, 10. 1; and ch. 14. 14); translate it *appointed time*, (ch. 14. 5, 13; Psalm 39. 4); Job reverts to the sad picture of man, however great, which he had drawn, (ch. 3. 14;) and details in this chap. the miseries which his friends will see, if, according to his request, (ch. 6. 28,) they will *look on him*. Even the Christian soldier, "warring a good warfare," rejoices when it is completed (1 Timothy, 1. 18; 2 Timothy, 2, 3; 4. 7, 8). 2. **earnestly desireth**—*Hebrew*, *pants for an (evening) shadow*. Easterns measure time by the length of their shadow. If the servant longs for the evening when his wages are paid, why may not Job long for the close of his hard service, when he shall enter on his *reward*? This proves that Job did not, as many maintain, regard the grave as a mere sleep. 3. Months of *comfortless misfortune*. "I am made *to possess*," *lit.*, *to be heir to*. Irony. *To be heir to*, is usually a matter of joy; but here it is *the entail of an involuntary and dismal inheritance*. Months, for days, to express its long duration. *Appointed*, *lit.*, *they have numbered to me*; marking well the unavoidable doom assigned to him. 4. *Lit.*, "when shall be *the flight of the night*?" [GESENIUS.] UMBREIT not so well, "The night is long extended:" *lit.*, *measured out*: so Marg. 5. In Elephantiasis maggots are bred in the sores (Acts, 12. 23; Isaiah, 14. 21). **clods of dust**—Rather, *a crust of dried filth and accumu-*

lated corruption (ch. 2. 7, 8). **my skin is broken and loathsome** — Rather, *comes together so as to heal up, and again breaks out with running matter.* [GESENIUS.] More simply the Hebrew is, “My skin rests (for a time) and (again) melts away” (Psalm 58. 7). 6. (Isaiah, 38. 12). Every day like the weaver’s shuttle leaves a thread behind; and each shall wear, as he weaves. But Job’s thought is, that his days must swiftly be cut off as a web: *without hope, viz., of a recovery and renewal of life* (ch. 14. 19; 1 Chronicles, 29. 15). 7. Address to God. *Wind, a picture of evanescence.* (Psalm 78. 39). **shall no more see** — Rather, “*shall no more return to see good.*” This change from the different wish in ch. 3. 17, etc., is most true to nature. He is now in a softer mood; and a beam from former days of *prosperity* falling upon memory, and the thought of the unseen world, where one *is seen no more* (v. 8), drew from him an expression of regret at leaving this world of *light* (Ecclesiastes, 11. 7). (So Hezekiah, Isaiah, 38. 11). Grace rises above nature (2 Corinthians, 5. 8). 8. The eye of him who beholds me [*present not past, as English Version,*] *i.e., in the very act of beholding me, seeth me no more.* “Thine eyes (are) upon me, and I am not?” He disappears, *even while God is looking upon him.* Job cannot survive the gaze of Jehovah (Psalm 104. 32; Revelation, 20. 11). Not, “Thine eyes seek me and I am not to be found;” for God’s eye penetrates even to the unseen world (Psalm 139. 8). UMBREIT unnaturally takes, *Thine*, to refer to *one of the three friends.* 9. (2 Samuel, 12. 23). **the grave** — The Sheol, or place of departed spirits, not disproving Job’s belief in the resurrection. It merely means, “He shall come up no more” in the *present* order of things. 10. (Psalm 103. 16.) The Oriental keenly loves his dwelling. In Arabian elegies the desertion of abodes by their occupants is often a theme of sorrow. Grace overcomes this also (Luke, 18. 29; Acts, 4. 34). 11. Therefore, as such is my hard lot, I will at least have the melancholy satisfaction of venting my sorrow in words. The Hebrew opening words, *therefore I, at all events,* express self-elevation. [UMBREIT.] 12-14. Why dost thou deny me the *comfort* of care-assuaging sleep? Why *scarest thou me with frightful dreams?* *Am I, then, a sea,* (regarded in Old Testament poetry, as a violent rebel against God, the Lord of nature, who therefore curbs his violence, (Jeremiah, 5. 22)? *or a whale,* or some other sea monster, (Isaiah, 27. 1), *that thou needest thus to watch and curb me?* The Egyptians “watched” the *crocodile* most carefully to prevent its doing mischief. 14. The frightful dreams resulting from Elephantiasis, he attributes to God; the common belief assigned all night visions to God. 15. UMBREIT translates; “So that I could wish to strangle myself,—dead by my own hands.” He softens this idea of Job’s harbouring the thought of suicide, by representing it as entertained only in agonizing dreams, and immediately repudiated with horror next verse, “Yet that (self-strangling) I loathe.” This is forcible and graphic. Perhaps the meaning is simply, “My soul chooses (even) strangling (or any violent) death rather than my life,” (*lit., my bones,* Psalm 35. 10; *i.e., rather than the wasted and diseased skeleton, left to him.*) In this view, “I loathe it,” v. 16, refers to his *life.* 16. “Let me alone;” *i.e., cease to afflict me for the few and vain days still left to me.* 17. (Psalm 8. 4; 144. 3). Job means “What is man that thou shouldest *make him of so much*

importance, and that thou shouldest expend such attention (heart-thought,) upon him," as to make him the subject of so severe trials? Job ought rather to have reasoned from God's condescending so far as to notice man as to try him, that there must be a wise and loving purpose in trial. David uses the same words in their right application, to express wonder, that God should do so much as he does, for insignificant man. Christians who know God manifest in the man Christ Jesús still more may use them. 18. With each new day (Psalm 73. 14). It is rather God's mercies, not our trials, that are "new every morning" (Lamentations, 3. 23). The idea is that of a shepherd taking count of his flock every morning, to see if all are there. [COCCEIUS.] 19. "How long (like a jealous keeper,) wilt thou never *take thine eyes off* (so the *Heb.* for *depart from*) me? Nor let me alone *for a brief respite*," (*lit., so long as I take to swallow my spittle*. An Arabic proverb, like our, *till I draw my breath*)? 20. "I have sinned (I grant): yet what sin can I do *against* (to: ch. 35. 6,) thee (of such a nature, that thou shouldest jealously watch and deprive me of all strength, as if thou didst fear me)? (Yet thou art one who hast men ever in view, ever *watchest* them),—O thou *Watcher*, (*v.* 12; Daniel, 9. 14), not as *English Version, Preserver* [GESENIUS] of men." Job had borne with patience his trials, as sent by God: (ch. 1. 21; ch. 2. 10); only his reason cannot reconcile the ceaseless continuance of his mental and bodily pains with his ideas of the divine nature. **set me as a mark**—Wherefore dost thou make me thy point of attack? *i.e.*, ever assail me with new pains. [UMBREIT.] (Lamentations, 3. 12). 21. **for now—very soon. in the morning**—Not the *resurrection*: for then Job will be found. It is a figure, from one seeking a sick man in the morning, and finding he has died in the night. So Job implies, that if God does not help him at once, it will be too late, for he will be gone. The reason why God does not give an irmediate sense of pardon to awakened sinners is, they think they have a *claim* on God for it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST SERIES—FIRST SPEECH OF BILDAD, MORE SEVERE AND COARSE THAN ELIPHAZ.

**Ver. 1-22. THE ADDRESS OF BILDAD.** 2. **like a . . . wind**—Disregarding restraints, and daring, against God. 3. The repetition of *pervert* gives an emphasis galling to Job (ch. 34. 12). "Wouldest thou have God (as thy words imply) pervert judgment," by letting thy sins go unpunished? He *assumes* Job's guilt from his sufferings. 4. **if**—Rather "*since* thy children have sinned against Him, and (*since*) He has cast them away for (*Heb., by the hand of*) their transgression, (Yet) if thou wouldest seek unto God, etc., if thou wert pure, etc., surely (even) now He would awake for thee." UMBREIT makes the apodosis to, "since thy children," etc., begin at "He has cast them away." Also, instead of *for*, "He gave them up *to, lit., into* the hand of) their own guilt." Bildad expresses the justice of God, which Job had arraigned. **Thy children have sinned, God leaves them to the consequence of their**

sin. Most cutting to the heart of the bereaved father. 5. **seek unto God betimes** — Early. Make it the *first* and chief anxiety (Psalm 78. 34; Hosea, 5. 15; Isaiah, 26. 9; Proverbs, 8. 17; 13. 24). 6. He would awake for thee, *i.e.*, arise to thy help. God seemed to be asleep towards the sufferer (Psalm 35. 23; 7. 6; Isaiah, 51. 9). **make . . . prosperous** — Restore to prosperity thy (their) righteous habitation. Bildad assumes it to have been heretofore the habitation of guilt. 7. **thy beginning** — The beginning of thy new happiness after restoration. **latter end** — (ch. 42. 12; Proverbs, 23. 18). 8, 9. The sages of the olden time reached an age beyond those of Job's time (Note 42. 16,); and therefore could give the testimony of a fuller experience. **of yesterday** — *i.e.*, a recent race. We know nothing as compared with them, from the brevity of our lives. So even Jacob (Genesis, 47. 9). Knowledge consisted then in the results of observation, embodied in poetical proverbs, and handed down by tradition. Longevity gave the opportunity of wider observation. **a shadow** — (Psalm 144. 4; 1 Chronicles, 29. 15). 10. **teach thee** — (ch. 6. 24,) had said, "Teach me." Bildad, therefore, says, Since you want *teaching*, Enquire of the fathers, They will teach thee. **utter words** — more than mere speaking: "put forth well-considered words." **out of their heart** — From observation and reflection. Not merely, *from their mouth*: such as Bildad insinuates were Job's words. Verses 11, 12, 13, embody in poetic and sententious form (probably the fragment of an old poem,) the observation of the elders. The double point of comparison between the ungodly and the paper-reed is, 1. The luxuriant prosperity at first; and, 2. The sudden destruction. 11. **rush** — Rather, *paper-reed*; the papyrus of Egypt, which was used to make garments, shoes, baskets, boats, and *paper* (a word derived from it). It and the flag or bulrush grow only in marshy places (such as are along the Nile). So the godless thrive only in external prosperity; there is in the hypocrite no inward stability; his prosperity is like the rapid growth of water plants. 12. **not out down** — Ere it has ripened for the scythe, it withers more suddenly than any herb, having no self-sustaining power, once that the moisture is gone, which other herbs do not need in the same degree. So ruin seizes on the godless in the zenith of prosperity, more suddenly, than on others who appear less firmly seated in their possessions. [UMBREIT.] (Psalm 112. 10). 13. **paths** — So *ways* (Proverbs, 1. 19). **all that forget God** — The distinguishing trait of the godless (Psalm 9. 17; 50. 22). 14. **cut off** — So GESENIUS. Or, to accord with the metaphor of the spider's *house*, "The confidence (on which he *builds*) shall be *laid in ruins*" (Isaiah, 59. 5, 6). 15. **he shall hold it fast** — Implying his eager grasp, when the storm of trial comes. As the spider "holds fast" by its web: but with this difference, the light spider is sustained by that on which it rests, the godless is not, by the thin web on which he rests. The expression, "Hold fast," properly applies to the spider holding his web, but is transferred to the man. Hypocrisy, like the spider's web, is fine-spun, flimsy, and woven out of its own inventions, as the spider's web out of its own bowels. An Arab proverb says, "Time destroys the well-built house, as well as the spider's web." 16. **before the sun** — *i.e.*, He (the godless,) is green only *before the sun rises*; but he cannot bear its heat, and withers. So succulent plants like the gourd (Jonah, 4. 7, 8). But the wide-spreading in the

garden does not quite accord with this. Better, "in sunshine;" the sun representing the smiling fortune of the hypocrite, during which he wondrously progresses. [UMBREIT.] The image is that of *weeds* growing in rank luxuriance, and spreading over even heaps of stones and walls, and then being speedily torn away. 17. **seeth the place of stones** — *Hebrew*, "the house of stones;" *i.e.*, the wall surrounding the garden. The parasite plant, in creeping towards and over the wall — the utmost bound of the garden — is said figuratively to "see" or regard it. 18. If He (God,) tear him away (*English Version*, *destroy*; properly, *to tear away rapidly and violently*,) from his place, "then it (the place personified,) shall deny him" (Psalm 103. 16). The very soil is ashamed of the weeds lying withered on its surface, as though it never had been connected with them. So, when the godless falls from prosperity, his nearest-friends disown him. 19. Bitter irony. The hypocrite boasts of joy. This then is his "joy" at the last. **and out of the earth** — Others immediately, who take the place of the man thus punished. Not *godly men* (Matthew, 3. 9). For "the place" of the weeds is among stones, where the gardener wishes no plants. But, *ungodly*: a fresh crop of *weeds* always springs up in the room of those torn up: there is no end of hypocrites on earth. [UMBREIT.] 20. Bildad regards Job, as a righteous man, who has fallen into sin. "God will not cast off forever a perfect" (or godly man, such as Job was,) if he will only repent. "Those alone who persevere in sin God will not help" (*Hebrew*, take by the hand; Psalm 73. 23; Isaiah, 41. 13; 42. 6,) when fallen. 21. **Till** — *lit.*, "to the point that:" God's blessing on thee, when repentant, will go on increasing to the point that, or until, etc. 22. The haters of Job are the wicked. They shall be clothed with shame (Jeremiah, 3. 25; Psalm 35. 26; 109. 29) at the failure of their hope, that Job would utterly perish, and because they, instead of him, come to nought.

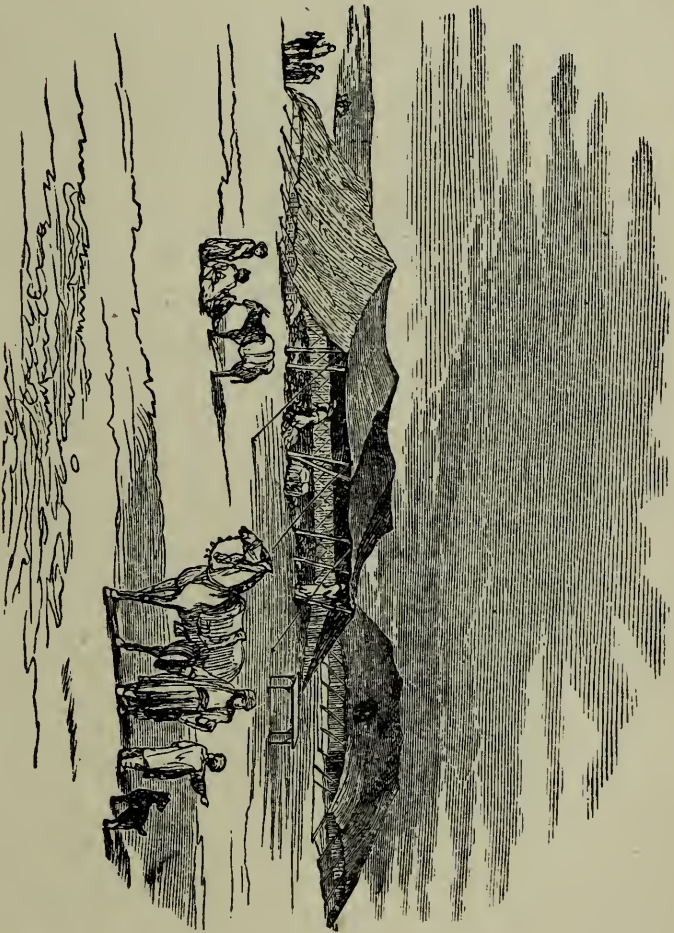
## CHAPTER XI.

## FIRST SERIES.

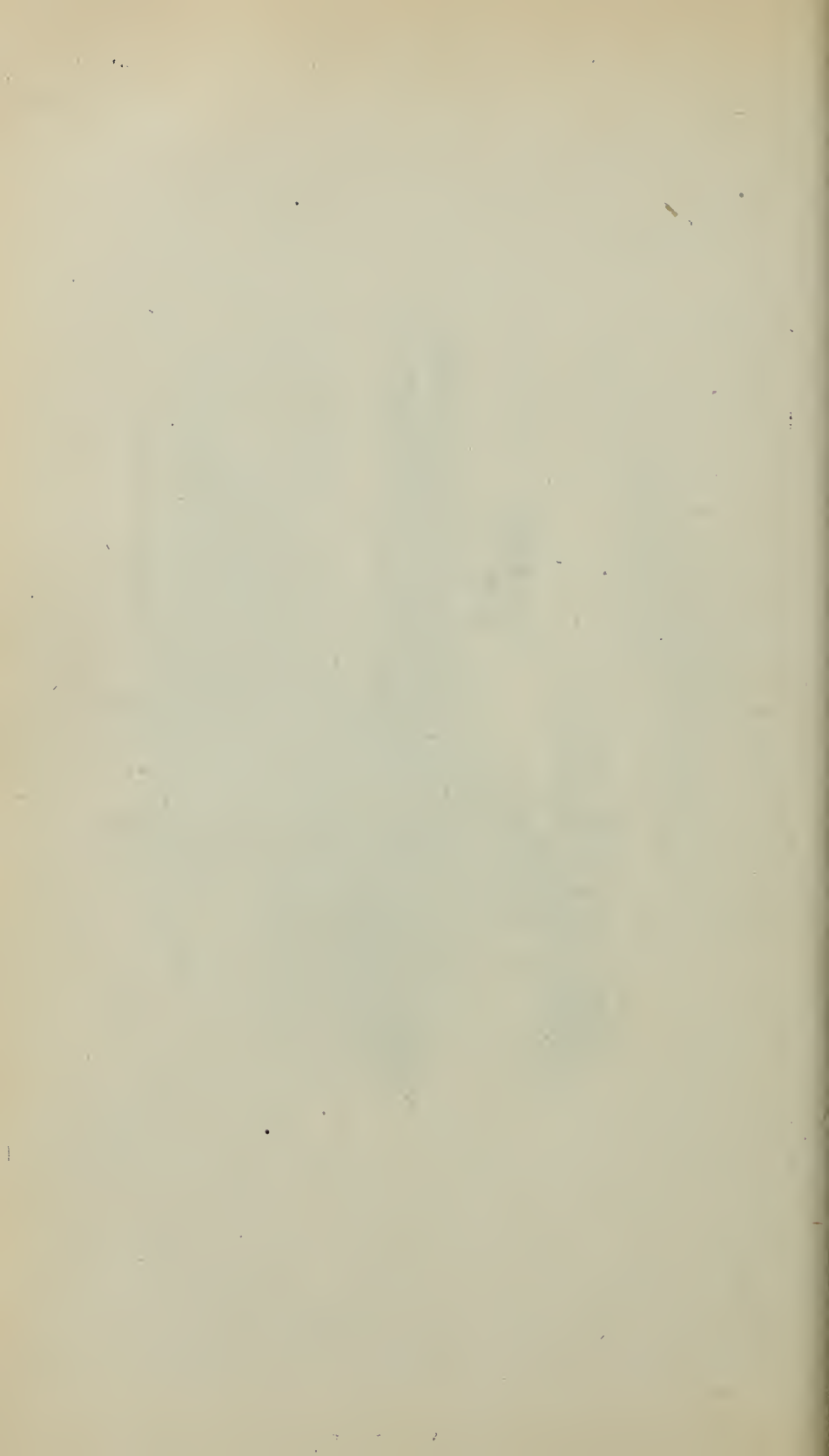
**Ver. 1-35.** REPLY OF JOB TO BILDAD. 2. **I know that it is so** — That God does not "pervert justice" (8. 3). But (even though I be sure of being in the right,) how can a mere man assert his right — (be just,) with God. The Gospel answers (Romans, 3. 26). 3. **If he (God) will contend with him** — *lit.*, "*deign* to enter into judgment." **he cannot answer, etc.** — He (man) would not dare, even if he had a thousand answers in readiness to one question of God's to utter one of them, from awe of His Majesty. 4. *Hebrew*, Wise in heart (understanding)! And mighty in power! God confounds the ablest arguer by His wisdom, and the mightiest by His power. **hardened** — *viz.*, *himself*, or *his neck* (Proverbs, 29. 1), *i.e.*, defied God. To prosper, one must fall in with God's arrangements of Providence and grace. 5. **and they know not** — *Hebrew* for "suddenly, unexpectedly, before they are aware of it" (Psalm 35. 8); "at unawares;" *Hebrew*, which *he knoweth not of* (Joel, 2. 14; Proverbs, 5. 6). 6. The earth is regarded, poetically, as resting on pil-

lars, which tremble in an earthquake (Psalm 75. 3; Isaiah, 24. 20). The literal truth as to the earth is given (26. 7). 7. The sun, at His command, doth not rise; *viz.*, in an eclipse, or the darkness that accompanies earthquakes (*v.* 6). **sealeth up**—*i.e.*, totally covers, as one would seal up a room, that its contents may not be seen. 8. **spreadeth out**—(Isaiah, 40. 22; Psalm 104. 2). But throughout it is not so much God's creating, as His governing, power over nature that is set forth. A storm seems a struggle between Nature and her Lord! Better, therefore, "Who *boweth* the heavens alone," without help of any other. God descends from the bowed-down heaven to the earth (Psalm 18. 9). The storm, wherein the clouds descend, suggests this image. In the descent of the vault of heaven, God has come down from His high throne, and walks majestic over *the mountain waves* (*Hebrew, heights,*) as a *conqueror taming their violence*. So *tread upon* (Deuteronomy, 33. 29; Amos, 4. 13; Matthew, 14. 26). The Egyptian hieroglyphic for impossibility is a man walking on waves. 9. **maketh**—Rather, from the Arabic, *covereth up*. This accords better with the context which describes His boundless power as controller, rather than as creator. [UMBREIT.] **Arcturus**—The great bear, which always revolves about the pole, and never sets. The Chaldeans and Arabs, early named and grouped in constellations the stars; often travelling, and tending flocks by night, they would naturally do so, especially as the rising and setting of some stars mark the distinction of seasons. BRINKLEY, *presuming* the stars here mentioned to be those of Taurus and Scorpio, and that these were the cardinal constellations of spring and autumn in Job's time, calculates, by the precession of equinoxes, the time of Job to be 818 years after the deluge, and 184 before Abraham. **Orion**—*Hebrew, the fool*; in ch. 38. 31, he appears fettered with "bands." The old legend represented this star as a hero, who presumptuously rebelled against God, and was therefore a *fool*, and was chained in the sky, as a punishment: for its rising is at the stormy period of the year. He is *Nimrod*—(*the exceedingly impious rebel,*) among the Assyrians; *Orion*, among the Greeks. Sabaism (worship of the heavenly hosts,) and hero-worship were blended in his person. He first subverted the patriarchal order of society by substituting a chieftainship based on conquest (Genesis, 10. 9, 10). **Pleiads**—*lit.*, "the heap of stars:" Arabic, "knot of stars." The various names of this constellation in the East expresses the *close union* of the stars in it (Amos, 5. 8). **chambers of the South**—The unseen regions of the Southern hemisphere, with its own set of stars, as distinguished from those just mentioned, of the Northern. The true structure of the earth is here implied. 10. Repeated from Eliphaz, ch. 5. 9. 11. **I see him not; he passeth on**—The image is that of a howling wind (Isaiah, 21. 1). Like it when it bursts invisibly upon man; so God is felt in the awful *effects* of His wrath, but is not *seen* (John, 3. 8). Therefore, reasons Job, it is impossible to contend with Him. 12. If "He taketh away," as in my case all that was dear to me, still a mortal cannot call Him to account. He only takes His own. He is an absolute King (Ecclesiastes, 8. 4; Daniel, 4. 35). 13. **If God**—Rather, "God will not withdraw His anger." *i.e.*, so long as a mortal obstinately resists. [UMBREIT.] **the proud helpers**—*The arrogant*, who would *help* one contending with the Almighty, are of no avail against Him.





Arab Tent.



14. **How much less shall I** — Who am weak — seeing that the mighty have to stoop before Him. Choose words (use a *well chosen speech*, in order to reason) with Him. 15. (ch. 10. 15). Though I were conscious of no sin, yet I would not dare to say so, but leave it to His judgment and mercy to justify me (1 Corinthians, 4. 4). 16, 17. "I would not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice, who breaketh me (as a tree stript of its leaves) with a tempest." 19. UMBREIT takes these as the words of God, translating, "What availeth the might of the strong?" "Here (saith he) behold! what availeth justice? Who will appoint me a time to plead?" (so Jeremiah, 49. 19). The last words certainly apply better to God, than to Job. The sense is substantially the same, if we make "me," with *English Version*, apply to Job. The "lo!" expresses God's swift readiness for battle, when challenged. 20. **it** — (ch. 15. 6; Luke, 19. 22); or, "He," God. 21. *Lit.*, here (and in *v.* 20). "I perfect! I should not know my soul! I would despise (disown) my life;" *i.e.*, Though conscious of innocence, I should be compelled, in contending with the infinite God, to ignore my own soul, and despise my past life, as if it were guilty. [ROSENMULLER.] 22. **one thing** — "It is all one; whether perfect or wicked,— He destroyeth." This was the point Job maintained against his friends, that the righteous and wicked alike are afflicted; and that great sufferings *here* do not prove great guilt (Luke, 13. 1-5; Ecclesiastes, 9. 2). 23. **if** — Rather, "While (His) scourge slays suddenly the wicked, (*v.* 22), He laughs at (*disregards*: not *derides*,) the pining away of the innocent." The only difference, says Job, between the innocent and guilty is, the latter are slain by a *sudden* stroke, the former *pine away gradually*. The translation, "trial," does not express the antithesis to "slay suddenly," as "pining away" does. [UMBREIT.] 24. Referring to righteous *judges*, in antithesis to "the wicked," in the parallel first clause, Whereas the *wicked* oppressor often has *the earth given into his hand*, the righteous *judges are led to execution*; culprits had their *faces covered* preparatory to execution (Esther, 7. 8). Thus the contrast of the wicked and righteous here answers to that in verse 23. **if not, where and who** — *If* God be *not* the cause of these anomalies, *where* is the cause to be found, and *who* is *he*? 25. **a post** — A courier. In the wide Persian empire such couriers, on dromedaries, or on foot, were employed to carry the royal commands to the distant provinces (Esther, 3. 13, 15; 8. 14). My days are, not like the slow caravan, but the fleet post. *The days* are themselves poetically said to *see no good*, instead of Job in them (1 Peter, 3. 10). 26. **swift ships** — Rather, *canoes of reeds*, or *papyrus skiffs*, used on the Nile, swift from their lightness (Isaiah, 18. 2). 27. The apodosis to 27,— "If I say, etc." I still am afraid of all my sorrows (returning), for I know that thou wilt (dost) not (by removing my sufferings) hold or declare me innocent." How then can I *leave off my heaviness*? 29. The *if* is better omitted: I (am treated by God, as) wicked; why then labour I in vain (to disprove His charge). Job submits, not so much because he is *convinced* that God is *right*, as because God is *powerful*, and he *weak*. [BARNES.] 30. **snow water** — Thought to be more cleansing than common water, owing to the whiteness of snow (Psalm 51. 7; Isaiah, 1. 18). **never so clean** — Better, to answer to the parallelism of the first clause which expresses the cleansing

material, *lye*: the Arabs used alkali mixed with oil, as *soap* (Psalm 73. 13; Jeremiah, 2. 22). 32. (Ecclesiastes, 6. 10; Isaiah, 45. 9). 33. **days-man**—Mediator or umpire; the imposition of whose hand expresses power to adjudicate between the persons. There might be one on a level with Job; the one party; but Job knew of none on a level with the Almighty, the other party (1 Samuel, 2. 25). We Christians know of such a Mediator (not, however, in the sense *umpire*,) on a level with both, the God man, Christ Jesus (1 Timothy, 2. 5). 34. **rod**—Not here the symbol of punishment, but of *power*. Job cannot meet God on fair terms, so long as God deals with him on the footing of His Almighty power. 35. **it is not so with me**—As it now is, God not taking His rod away, I am not on such a footing of equality, as to be able to vindicate myself.

## CHAPTER X.

**Ver. 1-22.** JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD CONTINUED. 1. **leave my complaint on myself**—Rather, "I will *give loose* to my complaint" (ch. 7. 11). 2. **show me, etc.**—Do not, by virtue of thy mere sovereignty, treat me as guilty, without showing me the reasons. 3. Job is unwilling to think God can have "pleasure" in using His power to "oppress" the weak, and to "treat" man, "the work of His own hands, as of no value" (*v.* 8; Psalm 138. 8). **shine upon**—Favor with prosperity (Psalm 50. 2). 4, 5, 6. Dost thou see as feebly as man? *i.e.*, with the same uncharitable eye, as, for instance, Job's friends. Is thy time as short? Impossible! Yet one might think, from the rapid succession of thy strokes, that thou hadst no time to spare in overwhelming me. 7. "Although thou (the Omniscient) knowest," etc., (connected with *v.* 6), "thou searchest after my sin." **and (that) none can deliver out of thine hand**—Therefore thou hast no need to deal with me with the rapid violence, which "man" would use (Note, *v.* 6). 8. "Made" with pains; implying *a work of difficulty and art*; applying to God language applicable only to man. **together round about**—Implying that the human body is a *complete unity*, the parts of which *on all sides* will bear the closest scrutiny. 9. **clay**—Next verse proves that the reference here is, not so much to the *perishable* nature of the materials, as to *their wonderful fashioning* by the Divine potter. 10. In the organization of the body from its rude commencements the liquid original gradually assumes a more solid consistency, like milk curdling into cheese (Psalm 139. 15, 16). Science reveals that the chyle circulated by the lacteal vessels is the supply to every organ. 11. **fenced**—Or "inlaid" (Psalm 139. 15); "curiously wrought." [UMBREIT.] In the fœtus the skin appears first, then the flesh, then the harder parts. 12. **visitation**—Thy watchful Providence. **spirit**—Breath. 13. **is with thee**—Was thy purpose. All God's dealings with Job in his creation, preservation, and present afflictions were part of His secret counsel (Psalm 139. 16; Acts, 15. 18; Ecclesiastes, 3. 11). 14, 15. Job is perplexed, because God "marks" every sin of his with such ceaseless rigour. Whether "wicked" (*godless* and a *hypocrite*) or "righteous" (comparatively: *sincere*), God condemns and punishes alike. **lift up my**

**head**—In conscious innocence (Psalm 3. 3). **see thou**—Rather, “and seeing I see—(I too well see) mine affliction,” (which seems to prove me guilty), [UMBREIT.] 16. **increaseth**—Rather, (if) I *lift up* (my head) thou wouldst hunt me, etc. [UMBREIT.] **and again**—As if a lion should not kill his prey at once, but come back and torture it again. 17. **witnesses**—His accumulated trials were like a succession of witnesses brought up in proof of his guilt, to wear out the accused. **changes and war**—Rather (“thou settest in array) against me host after host” (*lit., changes and a host, i.e., a succession of hosts*), *viz.*, his afflictions, and then reproach upon reproach from his friends. 20. But, since I was destined from my birth to these ills, at least give me a *little breathing time* during the few days left me (ch. 9. 34; 13. 21; Psalm 39. 13). The ideas of order and light, disorder and darkness, harmonize (Genesis, 1. 2). Three *Hebrew* words are used for darkness; in *v.* 21 (1), the common word “darkness:” here (2), “a land of gloom” (from a *Hebrew* root, to *cover up*:) (3), “as *thick darkness*” or *blackness* (from a root, expressing *sunset*). “Where the light thereof is like blackness.” It’s only sunshine is thick darkness. A bold figure of poetry. Job in a better frame has brighter thoughts of the unseen world. But his views at best wanted the definite clearness of the Christians. Compare with his words here (Revelation, 21. 23; 22. 5; 2 Timothy, 1. 10).

## CHAPTER XI.

## FIRST SERIES.

**Ver. 1-20.** FIRST SPEECH OF ZOPHAR. 2. Zophar assails Job for his empty words, and indirectly, the two friends, for their weak reply. Taciturnity is highly prized among Orientals (Proverbs, 10. 8, 9). 3. **lies**—Rather, *vain boasting* (Isaiah, 16. 6; Jeremiah, 48. 30). The “men” is emphatic; men of sense; in antithesis to “vain boasting.” **mockest**—Upbraided God by complaints. 4. **doctrine**—Purposely used of Job’s speeches, which sounded like lessons of doctrine (Deuteronomy, 32. 2; Proverbs, 4. 2). **thine**—Addressed to God. Job has maintained his *sincerity*, against his friends’ suspicion, not *faultlessness*. 6. **to that which is!**—Rather, “they are double to (man’s) *wisdom*.” [MICHAELIS.] So the *Hebrew* is rendered (Proverbs, 2. 7). God’s ways which you arraign, if you were shown their secret wisdom, would be seen vastly to exceed that of men, including yours (1 Corinthians, 1. 25). **exacteth**—Rather, “God *consigns to oblivion* in thy favor much of thy guilt.” 7. Rather, “Penetrate to the perfections of the Almighty” (ch. 9. 10; Psalm 139. 6). 8. **it**—The “wisdom” of God (*v.* 6). The abruptness of the *Hebrew* is forcible; “The heights of heaven! What canst thou do” (as to attaining to them with thy gaze, Psalm 129. 8)? **know**—*viz.*, of his perfections. 10. **cut off**—Rather, as in ch. 9. 11, *pass over* as a storm; *viz.*, rush upon in anger. **shut up**—In prison, with a view to trial. **gather together**—The parties for judgment: hold a judicial *assembly*, to pass sentence on the prisoners. 11. (Psalm 94. 11). **consider**—So as to punish it. Rather, from the connection,

v. 6, "He seeth wickedness also, which man does not *perceive*;" *lit.*, "But no (other, save He) perceiveth it." [UMBREIT.] God's "wisdom" (v. 6), detects sin where Job's human eye cannot reach (v. 8), so as to see any. 12. **vain**—Hollow. **would be**—*wants to consider himself* "wise:" opposed to God's "wisdom" (note, v. 11); refuses to see sin where God sees it (Romans, 1. 22). **wild ass' colt**—A proverb for untamed wildness (ch. 39. 5, 8; Jeremiah, 2. 24; Genesis, 16. 12; *Hebrew*, "a wild-ass man.") Man wishes to appear *wisely obedient* to his Lord, whereas he is *from his birth unsubdued in spirit*. 13. The apodosis to the "If" is at v. 15. The "preparation of the heart" is to be obtained (Proverbs, 16. 1), by "stretching out the hands" in prayer for it (Psalm 10. 17; 7 Chronicles, 29. 18). 14. Rather, "if thou wilt put far away the iniquity in thine hand" (as Zaccheus did, Luke, 19. 8). The apodosis or conclusion is at v. 15, "*then shalt thou,*" etc. Zophar refers to Job's own words (ch. 10. 15), "yet will I not *lift up my head,*" even though righteous. Zophar declares, if Job will follow his advice, he may "lift up his face." **spot**—(Deuteronomy, 32. 5). **steadfast**—*lit., run fast together*, like metals which become firm and hard by fusion. The sinner, on the contrary, is wavering. 16. Just as when the stream runs dry (ch. 6. 17), the danger threatened by its wild waves is forgotten (Isaiah, 65. 16). [UMBREIT.] 17. **age**—*days or life*. **the noon day**—*viz., of thy former prosperity*; which, in the poet's image, had gone on increasing, until it reached its height, as the sun rose higher until it reaches the meridian (Proverbs, 4. 18). **shine forth**—Rather, "though now *in darkness*, thou shalt be as the morning." Or, "thy darkness (if any dark shade should arise on thee, it) shall be as the morning" only the dullness of morning twilight, not nocturnal darkness). [UMBREIT.] 18. The experience of thy life will teach thee, there is hope for man in every trial. **dig**—*viz., wells*; the chief necessary in the East. Better, "though now *ashamed* (Romans, 5. 5, opposed to the previous "hope,") thou shalt then rest safely." [GESENIUS.] 19.—(Psalm 4. 8; Proverbs, 3. 24; Isaiah, 14. 30). Oriental images of prosperity. 19. **make suit**—*lit., "stroke thy face, caress thee"* (Proverbs, 19. 6). 20. A warning to Job, if he would not turn to God. "The wicked," *i.e., obdurate sinners*. **eyes...fail**—*i.e., in vain look for relief* (Deuteronomy, 28. 65). Zophar implies, Job's only hope of relief is in a change of heart. **they shall not escape**—*lit., "every refuge shall vanish from them."* **giving up the ghost**—Their hope shall leave them as the breath does the body (Proverbs, 11. 7).

## CHAPTER XII.

## FIRST SERIES.

Ver. 1-25. JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR, XII., XIII., XIV. 2. **wisdom shall die with you!**—Ironical. As if all the wisdom in the world was concentrated in them, and would expire when they expired. Wisdom makes "a people:" a foolish nation are "not a people" (Romans, 10. 19). 3. **not inferior**—Not vanquished in argument and "wisdom"

(ch. 13. 2). **such things as these**—Such commonplace maxims, as you so pompously adduce. 4. The unfounded accusations of Job's friends were a "mockery" of him. He alludes to Zophar's word, "mockest" (ch. 11. 3). **his neighbour, who calleth, etc.**—Rather, "I who call upon God that he may answer me favourably. [UMBREIT.] 5. Rather, "a torch (lamp) is an object of contempt in the thoughts of him who rests securely (is at ease), though it (which) was prepared for the falterings of the feet." [UMBREIT.] (Proverbs, 25. 19). "Thoughts" and "feet" are in contrast; also rests "securely," and "falterings." The wanderer, arrived at his night quarters, contemptuously throws aside the torch, which had guided his uncertain steps through the darkness. As the torch is to the wanderer, so Job to his friends. Once they gladly used his aid in their need, now they, in prosperity, mock him in his need. 6. Job shows that the matter of *fact* opposes Zophar's *theory* (ch. 11. 14, 19, 20), that the wickedness causes "insecurity" in men's "tabernacles." On the contrary they who "rob the tabernacles" (dwellings) of others "prosper securely" in their own. **into whose hand, etc.**—Rather, "who make a god of their own hand," *i.e.*, who regard their might as their only ruling principle. [UMBREIT.] 7, 8. Beasts, birds, fishes, and plants, reasons Job, teach that the violent live the most securely (*v.* 6). The vulture lives more securely than the dove, the lion than the ox, the shark than the dauphin, the rose than the thorn which tears it. **speak to the earth**—Rather, "*the shrubs of the earth.*" [UMBREIT.] 9. In all these cases, says Job, the agency must be referred to Jehovah ("the Lord," English version), though they may seem to man to imply imperfections *v.* 6; ch. 9. 24). This is the only undisputed passage of the poetical part, in which the name "Jehovah" occurs; in the historical parts it occurs frequently. 10. The soul, *i.e.*, the animal *life*. Man, reasons Job, is subjected to the same laws as the lower animals. 11. As the *mouth* by *tasting meats* selects what pleases it, so *the ear tries the words* of others and retains what is convincing. Each chooses according to his taste. The connection with *v.* 12 is, in reference to Bildad's appeal to the "ancients" (ch. 8. 8). You are right in appealing to them, since "with them was wisdom," etc. But you select such proverbs of theirs as suit your views, so I may borrow from the same such as suit mine. 12. **ancient**—Aged (ch. 15. 10). 13. In contrast to, "with the ancient is wisdom" (*v.* 12), Job quotes a saying of the ancients which suits his argument, "with Him (God) is (the true) wisdom" (Proverbs, 8. 14): and by that "wisdom and strength" "He breaketh down," etc., as an absolute Sovereign, not allowing man to penetrate His mysteries: man's part is to bow to His unchangeable decrees (ch. 1. 21). The Mahomedan saying is, "if God will, and how God will." 14. **shutteth up**—(Isaiah, 22. 22). Job refers to Zophar's "shut up" (ch. 11. 10). 15. Probably alluding to the flood. 16. (Ezekiel, 14. 9). 18. He looseth the *authority* of kings—the "bond" with which they bind their subjects (Isaiah, 45. 1; Genesis, 14. 4; Daniel, 2. 21). **a girdle**—The *cord*, with which they are bound as captives, instead of the royal "girdle" they once wore (Isaiah, 22. 21), and the bond they once bound others with. So "gird,"—put on one the *bonds* of a prisoner, instead of the ordinary *girdle* (John, 21. 19). 19. **princes**—Rather, *priests*, as the *Hebrew* is rendered (Psalm 99. 6). Even

the sacred ministers of religion are not exempt from reverses and captivity. **the mighty** — Rather, “the firm-rooted in power:” the Arabic root expresses *overflowing water*. [UMBREIT.] 20. **the trusty** — Rather, “those secure in their eloquence:” *ex. gr.*, the speakers in the gate (Isaiah, 3. 3). [BEZA.] **understanding** — *lit., taste, i.e.*, insight or spiritual discernment, which experience gives the aged. The same Hebrew word is applied to Daniel's wisdom in interpretation (Daniel, 2. 14). 21. Psalm 107. 40 quotes, in its first clause, this *v.*, and, in its second, the 24th *v.* of the chapter. **weakeneth the strength** — *lit., looseth the girdle*; Orientals wear flowing garments: when active strength is to be put forth, they gird up their garments with a girdle. Hence here — “He destroyeth their power” in the eyes of the people. 22. (Daniel, 2. 22). 23. Isaiah, 9. 3; Psalm 107. 38, 39, which Psalm quotes this chapter elsewhere. (See note *v.* 21). **straiteneth** — *lit., leadeth in, i.e.*, reduces. 24. **heart** — *intelligence*. **wander in a wilderness** — Figurative; not referring to any actual fact. This cannot be quoted to prove Job lived after Israel's wanderings in the desert. Psalm 107. 4, 40, quotes this passage. 25. Deuteronomy, 28. 29; Psalm 107. 27, again quotes Job, but in a different connection.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**Ver. 1-28.** JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR CONTINUED. I. **all this** — as to the dealings of Providence (ch. 12. 3). 3. Job wishes to plead his cause before God (ch. 9. 34, 35), as he is more and more convinced of the *valueless* character of his would-be “physicians” (ch. 16. 2). 4. **forgers of lies** — *lit., artful twisters of vain speeches*. [UMBREIT.] 5. (Proverbs, 17. 28). The Arabs say, “the wise are dumb: silence is wisdom.” 7. **deceitfully** — Use fallacies to vindicate God in His dealings; as if the end justified the means. Their “deceitfulness” for God, against Job, was, they asserted he was a sinner, because he was a sufferer. 8. **accept his person** — God's: *i.e.*, be partial for Him, as when a judge favors one party in a trial, because of personal considerations. **contend for God** — *viz.*, with fallacies and prepossessions against Job before judgment (Judges, 6. 31). Partiality can never please the impartial God; nor the goodness of the cause excuse the unfairness of the arguments. 9. *Will the issue to you be good when He searches out you and your arguments? Will you be regarded by Him as pure and disinterested?* **mock** — (Galatians, 6. 7). Rather, “can you deceive Him as one man?” etc. 10. *If ye do, though secretly, act partially.* (Note *v.* 8; Psalm 82. 1, 2). God can successfully vindicate His acts, and needs no fallacious argument of man. 11. **make you afraid?** — *viz.*, of employing sophisms in His name (Jeremiah, 10. 7, 10). **remembrances** — “Proverbial maxims,” so called because *well-remembered*. **like unto ashes** — Or, “parables of ashes;” the image of lightness and nothingness (Isaiah, 44. 20). **bodies** — Rather, “entrenchments;” those of clay, as opposed to those of stone, are easy to be destroyed: so the proverbs, behind which they entrench themselves, will not shelter them, when God shall appear to reprove them for their injustice to Job.



13. Job would wish to be spared their speeches, so as to speak out all his mind as to his wretchedness (*v.* 14), happen what will. 14. A proverb for "Why should I anxiously desire to save my life?" [EICHORN.] The image in the first clause is that of a wild beast, which in order to preserve his prey, carries it in his teeth. That in the second refers to men who hold in the hand what they want to keep secure. 15. **in him** — So the Margin or Keri reads. But the textual reading or cetib is "*not*," which agrees best with the context, and other passages wherein he says he has *no hope* (ch. 6. 11; 7. 21; 10. 20; 19. 10). "Though He slay me, and I dare *no more hope*, yet I will maintain," etc., *i.e.*, "I desire to vindicate myself before Him," as *not* a hypocrite. [UMBREIT and NOYES.] 16. **He** — Rather, "*This* also already speaks in my behalf [*lit.*, "for my *saving* acquittal"], for an hypocrite would not wish to come before Him" (as I do). [UMBREIT.] (See last clause of *v.* 15). 17. **my declaration** — *viz.*, that I wish to be permitted to justify myself immediately before God. **with your ears** — *i.e.*, attentively. 18. **ordered** — Implying a *constant preparation* for defence in his confidence of innocence. 19. **if, etc.**, — Rather, "*Then* would I hold my tongue and give up the ghost," *i.e.*, if any one can contend with me and prove me false, I have no more to say, "I will be silent and die." Like our "I would stake my life on it." [UMBREIT.] 20. Address to God. **not hide** — Stand forth boldly to maintain my cause. 21. (Note, 9. 34; Psalm 39. 10). 22. **call** — A challenge to the defendant to answer to the charges. **answer** — The defence begun. **speak** — As plaintiff. **answer** — To the plea of the plaintiff. Expressions from a trial. 23. The catalogue of my sins ought to be great, to judge from the severity with which God ever anew crushes one already bowed down. Would that he would reckon them up! He then would see how much my calamities outnumber them. **sin?** — Singular, "I am unconscious of a *single* particular sin, much less many." [UMBREIT.] 24. **hidest... face** — A figure from the gloomy impression caused by the sudden clouding over of the sun. **enemy** — God treated Job as an enemy who must be robbed of power by ceaseless sufferings (ch. 7. 17, 21). 25. (Leviticus, 26. 36; Psalm 1. 4). Job compares himself to a leaf already fallen, which the storm still chases hither and thither. **break** — *lit.*, *shake with* (thy) *terrors*. Jesus Christ does not "break the bruised reed" (Isaiah, 42. 3; 27. 8). 26. **writest** — A judicial phrase, to note down the determined punishment. The sentence of the condemned used to be *written* down (Isaiah, 10. 1; Jeremiah, 22. 30; Psalm 149. 9). [UMBREIT.] **bitter things** — Bitter punishments. **makest me to possess** — Or, *inherit*. In old age he receives possession of the inheritance of sin thoughtlessly acquired in youth. "To inherit *sins*" is to inherit the *punishments* inseparably connected with them in *Hebrew* ideas (Psalm 25. 7). 27. **stocks** — In which the prisoner's feet were made fast until the time of execution (Jeremiah, 20. 2). **lookest narrowly** — As an overseer would watch a prisoner. **print** — Either the stocks, or his disease, *marked* his *soles* (*Hebrew, roots*) as the bastinado would. Better, thou drawest (or *diggest*) [GESENIUS], a line (or *trench*) [GESENIUS], round my soles, beyond which I must not move. [UMBREIT.] 28. Job speaks of *himself* in the third person, thus forming the translation to the *general* lot of man (ch. 14. 1; Psalm 39. 11; Hosea, 5. 12).

## CHAPTER XIV.

**Ver. 1-22.** JOB PASSES FROM HIS OWN TO THE COMMON MISERY OF MANKIND. 1. **Woman**—Feeble and in the East looked down upon (Genesis, 2. 21). Man being born of one so frail must be frail himself (Matthew, 11. 11). **few days**—(Genesis, 47. 9; Psalm 90. 10). *Lit., short of days.* Man is the reverse of *full of days and short of trouble.* 2. (Psalm 90. 6; Note, ch. 8. 9). 3. **open...eyes upon**—Not in graciousness; but, “Dost thou sharply fix thine eyes upon?” (Note 7. 20; also 1. 7). Is one so frail as man worthy of such constant watching on the part of God? (Zachariah, 12. 4). **me**—So frail. **thee**—So Almighty. 4. A plea in mitigation. The doctrine of original sin was held from the first. “Man is unclean from his birth, how then can God expect perfect cleanliness from such a one and deal so severely with me?” 5. **determined**—(ch. 7. 1; Isaiah, 10. 23; Daniel, 9. 27; 11. 36). 6. **Turn**—*viz.*, thine eyes from watching him so jealously (*v.* 3.) **hireling**—(ch. 7. 1). **accomplish**—Rather, “enjoy.” That he may at least enjoy the measure of the rest of the hireling, who though hard-worked reconciles himself to his lot by the hope of his rest and reward. [UMBREIT.] 7. Man may the more claim a peaceful life, since, when separated from it by death, he never returns to it. This does not deny a future life, but a return to the *present condition* of life. Job plainly hopes for a future state (*v.* 13; ch. 7. 2). Still it is but vague and trembling *hope*, not *assurance*; excepting that one bright glimpse in ch. 19. 25. The Gospel revelation was needed to change fears, hopes and glimpses into clear and definite certainties. 9. **scent**—*Exhalation*, which, rather than the humidity of water, causes the tree to germinate. In the antithesis to *man* the *tree* is personified, and volition is poetically ascribed to it. **like a plant**—“as if newly planted.” [UMBREIT.] Not as if trees and plants were a different species. 10. **man...man**—Two distinct *Hebrew* words are here used: *Geber*, a *mighty* man; though mighty, he dies: *Adam*, a *man of earth*: because earthy, he gives up the ghost. **wasteth**—is reduced to nothing; he cannot revive in the present state, as the tree does. The cypress and pine, which when cut down, do not revive, were the symbols of death among the Romans. 11. **sea**—*i.e.*, a *lake*, or pool formed from the outspreading of a river. Job lived near the Euphrates: and “sea” is applied to it (Jeremiah, 51. 36; Isaiah, 27. 1). So of the Nile (Isaiah, 19. 5). **fail**—Utterly disappeared by drying up. The rugged channel of the once flowing water answers to the outstretched corpse—(“lieth down,” *v.* 12,) of the once living man. 12. **heavens be no more**—This only implies that Job had no hope of living again in the *present* order of the world, not that he had no hope of life again in a new order of things. Psalm 102. 26, proves that early under the Old Testament the dissolution of the present earth and heavens was expected (cf. Genesis, 8. 22). Enoch *before Job* had implied that the “saints shall live again” (Jude, 14; Hebrews, 11. 13-16). Even if, by this phrase, *Job* meant “never” (Psalm 89. 29), in his gloomier state of feelings, yet the *Holy Ghost* has made him uncon-

sciously (Peter, I. 11, 12,) use language expressing the truth, that the resurrection is to be preceded by the dissolution of the heavens. In v. 13-15, he plainly passes to brighter hopes of a world to come. 13. Job wishes to be kept hidden in the grave, until God's wrath against him shall have passed away. So whilst God's wrath is visiting the earth for the abounding apostasy which is to precede the Second Coming, God's people shall be hidden against the resurrection-glory (Isaiah, 26. 19-21).

**set time**—A decreed time (Acts, I. 7). 14. **shall he live?** The answer implied is. *There is a hope that he shall, though not in the present order of life:* as is shown by the words following. Job had denied (v. 10-12,) that man shall live again in this present world. But hoping for a "set time" when God shall remember and raise him out of the "hiding" place of the grave (v. 13), he declares himself willing to "wait all the days of his appointed time" of continuance in the grave, however long and hard that may be. "Appointed time," *lit., warfare, hard service:* implying the *hardship* of being shut out of the realms of life, light and God for the time he shall be in the grave (ch. 7. 4). **change**—My release, as a soldier at his post released from duty by *the relieving guard* (Note 10. 17), [UMBREIT and GESENIUS], but elsewhere [GESENIUS] explains it *renovation*, as of plants in spring (v. 7); but this does not accord so well with the metaphor in "appointed time" or "warfare." 15. *viz.,* at the resurrection (John, 5. 28; Psalm 17. 15). **have a desire to**—*lit., become pale with anxious desire:* the same word is translated "sore longedst after" (Genesis, 31. 30; Psalm 84. 2): implying the utter unlikelihood that God would leave in oblivion the "creature of His own hands so fearfully and wonderfully made." It is objected that if Job knew of a future retribution, he would make it the *leading* topic in solving the problem of the permitted afflictions of the righteous. But 1. "He did not intend to exceed the limits of what was *clearly revealed*; the doctrine was then in a vague form only. 2. The doctrine of God's moral government in *this* life, even *independently of the future*, needed vindication. 16. Rather, Yea, thou wilt number, etc., and wilt not (as now) jealously watch over my sin." Thenceforward, instead of severe watching for every sin of Job, God will guard him against every sin. "Number... steps," *i.e., minutely attend to* them, that they may not wander. [UMBREIT.] (I Samuel, 2. 9; Psalm 37. 23). 17. **sealed up**—(ch. 9. 7). It is shut up in eternal oblivion, *i.e.,* God thenceforth will think no more of my former sins. *to cover* sins is to *completely forgive* them (Psalm 32. 1; 85. 2). Purses of money in the East are usually sealed. **sewest up**—Rather, "coverest;" akin to an Arabic word "to colour over," to forget wholly. 18. **cometh to naught**—*lit., fadeth:* a poetical image from a leaf (Isaiah, 34. 4). Here Job fall back into his gloomy bodings as to the grave. Instead of "and surely:" translate "yet:" marking the transition from his brighter hopes. Even the solid mountain falls and crumbles away, man therefore cannot "hope" to escape decay or to live again in the *present* world (v. 19). **out of his place**—So man (Psalm 103. 16). 19. The *Hebrew* order is more forcible, "Stones themselves are worn away by water." **things which grew out of**—Rather, "floods wash away the dust of the earth." There is a gradation from "mountains" to "rocks" (v. 18), then "stones," then last "dust of the earth;" thus the solid

mountains at last disappears utterly. 20. **prevailcest**—Dost overpower by superior strength. **passeth**—Dieth. **changest countenance**—The change in the visage at death. Differently (Daniel, 5. 9). 21. One striking trait is selected from the sad picture of the severance of the dead from all that passes in the world (Ecclesiastes, 9. 5), viz., the utter separation of parents and children. 22. “Flesh” and “soul” describe the whole man. Scripture rests the hope of a future life, not on the inherent immortality of the soul, but on the restoration of the *body* with the soul. In the unseen world, Job in a gloomy frame anticipates, man shall be limited to the thought of his own misery. “Pain is by personification, from *our* feelings whilst *alive*, attributed to the flesh and soul, as if the man could feel in his body when dead. It is the dead in general, not the wicked, who are meant here.

## CHAPTER XV.

## SECOND SERIES.

**Ver. 1-35.** SECOND SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ. 2. **a wise man**—which Job claims to be. **vain knowledge**—*Hebrew, windy knowledge; lit., “of wind”* (ch. 8. 2). In Ecclesiastes, 1. 14; *Hebrew, to catch wind* expresses to strive for what is vain. **east wind**—Stronger than the previous “wind.” For in that region the East wind is the most destructive of winds (Isaiah, 27. 8). Thus here,—*empty violence*. **belly**—The inward parts, the breast (Proverbs, 18. 8). 4. **fear**—Reverence for God (ch. 4. 6; Psalm 2. 11). **prayer**—Meditation in Psalm 104. 34; so *devotion*. If thy views were right, reasons Eliphaz, that God disregards the afflictions of the righteous and makes the wicked to prosper, all devotion would be at an end. 5. The sophistry of thine own speeches proves thy guilt. 6. No *pious* man would utter such sentiments. 7. *i.e.*, Art thou *wisdom* personified? Wisdom existed before the hills, *i.e.*, the eternal Son of God (Proverbs, 8. 25; Psalm 90. 2). Was thou in existence before Adam? The farther back one existed, the nearer he was to the Eternal Wisdom. 8. **secret**—Rather, “Wast thou a listener *in the secret council* of God?” The *Hebrew* means properly *the cushions* on which a divan of counsellors in the East usually sit. God’s servants are admitted to God’s secrets (Psalm 25. 14; Genesis, 18. 17; John, 15. 15). **restrain**—Rather, didst thou take away, *or borrow*, thence (*viz.*, from the Divine secret council) thy wisdom? Eliphaz in this (*v.* 8, 9) retorts Job’s words upon himself (ch. 12. 2, 3; 13. 2). 9. **in us**—Or “with us,” Hebraism for *we are aware of*. 10. On our side, thinking with us are the aged. Job had admitted that wisdom is with them (ch. 12. 12). Eliphaz seems to have been himself older than Job; perhaps the other two also were so (ch. 32. 6). Job in ch. 30. 1, does not refer to his three friends; it therefore forms no objection. The Arabs are proud of fulness of years. 11. **consolations**—*viz.*, the revelation which Eliphaz had stated as a consolatory reproof to Job, and which he repeats in *v.* 14. **secret**—Hast thou some *secret* wisdom and source of consolation, which makes thee disregard those

suggested by me? (*v.* 8). Rather, from a different *Hebrew* root, Is the word of *kindness* or *gentleness* addressed by me treated by thee as valueless? [UMBREIT.] 12. **wink** — *i.e.*, why do thy eyes *evince pride*? (Proverbs, 6. 13; Psalm 35. 19). 13. *i.e.*, Frettest against God, and lettest fall rash words. 14. Eliphaz repeats the revelation (ch. 4. 17), in substance, but using Job's own words (ch. 14. 1, Note on "born of a woman") to strike him with his own weapons. 15. Repeated from ch. 4. 18; "servants" there are "saints" here, *viz.*, holy angels. **heavens** — *lit.*, or else answering to "angels" (ch. 4. 18; see Note there, and ch. 25. 5). 16. **filthy** — In Arabic *sour* (Psalm 14. 3; 53. 3), corrupted from his original purity. **drinketh** — (Proverbs, 19. 28). 17. In direct contradiction of Job's position (ch. 12. 6, etc.), that the lot of the wicked was the most prosperous here, Eliphaz appeals (1) to his own experience, (2) to the wisdom of the ancients. 18. Rather, "and which, as handed down from their fathers; they have not concealed." 19. Eliphaz speaks like a genuine Arab when he boasts that his ancestors had ever possessed the land unmixed with foreigners. [UMBREIT.] His words are intended to oppose Job's (ch. 9. 24); "the earth" in their case was *not* "given into the hand of the wicked." He refers to the division of the earth by Divine appointment (Genesis, 10. 5; 25. 32). Also he may insinuate that Job's sentiments had been corrupted from original purity by his vicinity to the Sabeans and Chaldeans. [ROSENMULLER.] 20. **travaileth** — Rather, "trembleth of himself," though there is no real danger. [UMBREIT.] **and the number of (his) years, etc.** — This gives the reason why the wicked man trembles continually, *viz.*, because he knows not the moment when his life must end. 21. An evil conscience conceives alarm at every sudden sound, though it be in a time of peace ("prosperity"), when there is no real danger (Leviticus, 26. 36; Proverbs, 28. 1; 2 Kings, 7. 6). 22. **darkness** — *viz.*, *danger* or *calamity*. Glancing at Job who despaired of restoration: in contrast to good men when in darkness (Micah, 7. 8, 9). **waited for of** — *i.e.*, He is destined for the sword. [GESENIUS.] Rather (in the night of danger), "he *looks anxiously towards* the sword," as if every sword was drawn against him. [UMBREIT.] 23. Wandereth in *anxious search* for bread. Famine in Old Testament depicts sore need (Isaiah, 5. 13). Contrast the pious man's lot (ch. 5. 20–22). **knoweth** — Has the firm conviction. Contrast the same word applied to the pious (ch. 5. 24, 25). **ready at his hand** — An Arabic phrase to denote a thing's *complete readiness* and *full presence*, as if in the hand. 24. **prevail** — Break upon him suddenly and terribly, as a king, etc. (Proverbs, 6. 11). 25. **stretcheth . . . hand** — Wielding the spear, as a bold rebel against God (ch. 9. 4; Isaiah, 27. 4). 26. **on his neck** — Rather, "with outstretched neck," *viz.*, that of the rebel. [UMBREIT.] (Psalm 75. 5). **upon . . . bucklers** — Rather, "*with* — his (the rebel's, not God's) bucklers." The rebel and his fellows are depicted as joining shields together, to form a compact covering over their heads against the weapons hurled on them from a fortress. [UMBREIT and GESENIUS.] 27. The well nourished body of the rebel is the sign of his prosperity. **collops** — *Masses* of fat. He pampers and fattens himself with sensual indulgences. Hence his rebellion against God (Deuteronomy, 32. 15; 1 Samuel, 2. 29). 28. The class of wicked here described is that of robbers who plunder "cities,"

and seize on the houses of the banished citizens (Isaiah, 13. 20). Eliphaz chooses this class, because Job had chosen the same (ch. 12. 6). **heaps**—Of ruins. 29. Rather, he shall not *increase* his riches: he has reached his highest point: his prosperity shall not continue. **perfection**—Rather, “His *acquired wealth*—what he possesses—shall not *be extended*,” etc. 30. **depart**—*i.e.*, escape (v. 22, 23). **branches**—*viz.*, his offspring (ch. 1. 18, 19; Psalm 37. 35). **dry up**—The “flame” is the sultry wind in the East by which plants most full of sap are suddenly shrivelled. **his mouth**—*i.e.*, God's wrath (Isaiah, 11. 4). 31. Rather, let him not trust in vanity or he will be deceived, etc. **vanity** That which is unsubstantial. Sin is its own punishment (Proverbs 1. 31; Jeremiah, 2. 19). 32. *lit.*, “it (*the tree* to which he is compared v. 30, or else *his life*), shall not be filled up in its time:” *i.e.*, “he shall be ended before his time.” **shall not be green**—Image from a withered tree: the childless extinction of the wicked. 33. Images of incompleteness. The loss of the unripe grapes is poetically made the vine tree's own act, in order to express more pointedly that the sinner's ruin is the fruit of his own conduct (Isaiah, 3. 11; Jeremiah, 6. 19). 34. Rather, the binding together of the hypocrites (wicked) shall be *fruitless*. [UMBREIT.] Tabernacles of bribery, *viz.*, dwellings of unjust judges, often reprobated in the Old Testament (Isaiah, 1. 23). The “fire of God” that consumed Job's possessions (ch. 1. 16) Eliphaz insinuates may have been on account of Job's bribery as an Arab sheikh or emir. 35. Bitter irony, illustrating the “unfruitfulness” (v. 34) of the wicked. Their conceptions and birth-givings consist solely in mischief, etc. (Isaiah, 33. 11). **prepareth**—Hatcheth.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## SECOND SERIES.

**Ver. 1-22.** JOB'S REPLY. 2. (ch. 13. 4). 3. “Words of wind,” *Hebrew*. He retorts upon Eliphaz his reproach (ch. 15. 2). **emboldeneth**—*lit.*, What wearies you so that you contradict? *i.e.*, What have I said to *provoke* you, etc. [SCHUTTENS.] Or, as better accords with the first clause, “wherefore do ye weary yourselves contradicting.” [UMBREIT.] 4. **heap up**—Rather, marshal together (an army of) words. **shake head**—in mockery: it means *nodding*, rather than *shaking*; nodding is not with us, as in the East, a gesture of scorn (Isaiah, 37. 22; Jeremiah, 18. 16; Matthew, 27. 39). 5. **strengthen with mouth**—Bitter irony. In allusion to Eliphaz's boasted “consolations” (ch. 15. 11). Opposed to, strengthening with the *heart*, *i.e.*, with real consolation. *Translate*, “I also (like you) could strengthen with the *mouth*,” *i.e.*, with *heartless* talk: “And the moving of my *lips* (mere lip-comfort) could console” (in the same fashion as you do). [UMBREIT.] “*Heartly* counsel” (Proverbs, 27. 9,) is the opposite. 6. **eased**—*lit.*, What (portion of my sufferings) goes from me? 7. **But now**—Rather, “ah!” **he**—God. **company**—Rather, “band of *witnesses*,” *viz.*, those who could attest his *innocence*, his children, servants, etc. So the same *Hebrew* is translated next

**verse.** UMBREIT makes his band of witnesses *himself*, for alas! he had no other to witness for him. But this is too recondite. 8. **filled with wrinkles** — Rather (as also the same *Hebrew* word in ch. 22. 16; *English Version*, “cut down,”) “thou hast fettered me, thy witness,” (*besides* cutting off my “band of witnesses,” v. 7), *i.e.*, hast disabled me by pains from properly attesting my innocence. But another “witness” arises against him, viz., his “leanness” or wretched state of body, construed by his friends into a proof of his guilt. The radical meaning of the *Hebrew* is to draw together, whence flow the double meanings to bind or fetter, and in *Syriac*, to wrinkle. **leanness** — meaning also *lie*; implying that it was a *false* “witness.” 9. Image from a wild beast. So God is represented (ch. 10. 16). **who hateth me** — Rather, “and pursues me hard.” Job would not ascribe “hatred” to God (Psalm 50. 22). **mine enemy** — Rather, he sharpens, etc., *as an enemy* (Psalm 7. 12). Darts wrathful glances at me, like a foe ch. 13. 24). 10. **gaped** — not in order to devour, but to mock him. To fill his cup of misery, the mockery of his friends (v. 10) is added to the hostile treatment from God (v. 9). **smitten . . . cheek** — *fig.*, for contemptuous abuse (Lamentations, 3. 30; Matthew, 5. 39). **gathered themselves** — “Conspired unanimously.” [SCHUTTENS.] 11. **turned me over** — *lit.*, cast me headlong into, etc. **the ungodly** — viz., his professed friends, who persecuted him with unkind speeches. 12. **I was at ease** — in past times (ch. 1). **by my neck** — as an animal does its prey (so ch. 10. 16). **shaken** — violently; in contrast to his former “ease” (Psalm 102. 10). Set me up (*again*). **mark** — (ch. 7. 20; Lamentations, 3. 12). God let me always recover strength, so as to torment me ceaselessly. 13. **his archers** — The image of last verse is continued. God, in making me His “mark,” is accompanied by *the three friends*, whose words wound like sharp arrows. **gall** — put for a vital part. So the liver (Lamentations, 2. 11). 14. The image is from storming a fortress by making breaches in the walls (2 Kings, 14. 13). **a giant** — A mighty warrior. 15. **sewed** — denoting the tight fit of the mourning garment: It was a sack with arm-holes *closely sewed* to the body. **horn** — image from horned cattle, which when excited tear the earth with their horns. The horn was the emblem of *power* (1 Kings, 22. 11). Here, it is “in the *dust*,” which as applied to Job denotes *his humiliation* from former greatness. To throw one’s self in the dust was a sign of *mourning*: this idea is here joined with that of *excited despair*, depicted by the fury of a horned beast. The Druses of Lebanon still wear horns as an ornament. 16. **foul** — Rather, “is red,” *i.e.*, flushed and heated. [UMBREIT and NOYES.] **shadow of death** — *i.e.*, darkening through many tears (Lamentations, 5. 17). Job here refers to Zophar’s implied charge (ch. 11. 14). Nearly the same words occur as to Jesus Christ (Isaiah, 53. 9). So v. 10 above answers to the description of Jesus Christ (Psalm 12. 13; Isaiah, 50. 6; and v. 4, to Psalm 22. 7). He alone realized what Job aspired after, viz., outward *righteousness* of acts and inward *purity* of devotion. Jesus Christ as the representative man is typified in some degree in every servant of God in the Old Testament. 18. **my blood** — *i.e.*, my undeserved suffering. He compares himself to one murdered, whose blood the earth refuses to drink up until he is avenged (Genesis, 4. 10, 11; Ezekiel, 24. 1, 8; Isaiah, 26. 21). The Arabs say the dew of heaven will not descend on a spot watered

with innocent blood (cf. 2 Samuel, I. 21). **no place** — no resting place. "May my cry never stop!" May it go abroad! "Earth" in this verse in antithesis to "heaven" (v. 19). May my innocence be as well known to *man*, as it is even now to God! 19. **also now** — even now when I am so greatly misunderstood on earth, God in *heaven* is sensible of my innocence. **record** — *Hebrew, my witness*. Amidst all his impatience, Job still trusts in God. 20. *Hebrew*, more forcibly, "my mockers — my friends!" A heart-cutting paradox! [UMBREIT.] God alone remains to whom he can look for attestation of his innocence; plaintively with tearful eye he supplicates for this. 21. **one** — Rather, He (God). "O that He would plead for a man (viz., me) against God." Job quaintly says, God must support me against God: for He makes me to suffer, and He alone knows me to be innocent. [UMBREIT.] So God helped Jacob in wrestling against Himself (ch. 23. 6; Genesis, 32. 25). God in Jesus Christ does plead with God for man (Romans, 8. 26, 27). **as a man** — *lit.*, the Son of man. A prefiguring of the advocacy of Jesus Christ — a boon longed for by Job (ch. 9. 33), though the spiritual pregnancy of his own words, designed for all ages, was but little understood by him (Psalm 80. 17). **for his neighbor** — *Hebrew, friend*. Job himself (ch. 42. 8), pleaded as intercessor for his "friends," though "his scorers" (v. 20); "for *friends*" (John, 15. 13-15). 22. **few** — *lit.*, "years of number" *i.e.*, few, opposed to *numberless* (Genesis, 34. 30).

## CHAPTER XVII.

**Ver. 1-16.** JOB'S ANSWER CONTINUED. 1. **breath-corrupt** — result of elephantiasis. But [UMBREIT], "my strength (spirit) is spent." **extinct** — Life is compared to expiring light. "The light of my day is extinguished." **graves** — *plural*, to heighten the force. 2. [UMBREIT], more emphatically, "I had only not to endure *mockery*, in the midst of their *contentions* I (mine eye) would remain quiet." "Eye continue," or *tarry all night* (*Hebrew*), is a figure taken from sleep at night, to express undisturbed *rest*: opposed to (ch. 16. 20), when the eye of Job is represented as pouring out tears to God *without rest*. 3. **Lay down** — viz., a pledge or security, *i.e.*, be my surety; do thou attest my innocence, since my friends only *mock* me (v. 2). Both litigating parties had to lay down a sum as security before the trial. **put me in surety** — Provide a surety for me (in the trial) with thee. A preassage of the "surety" (Hebrews, 7. 22), or "one Mediator between God and man" (see note 16. 21). **strike hands** — "who else (save God Himself) could strike hands with me?" *i.e.*, be my security (Psalm 119. 122). The Hebrew strikes the hand of him for whom he goes security (Proverbs, 6. 1). 4. **their heart** — The *Intellect* of his friends. **shalt. . . exalt** — Rather imperative, exalt them not. Allow them not to conquer. [UMBREIT.] (Isaiah, 6. 9, 10). 5. The *Hebrew* for *flattery* is *smoothness*: then it came to mean a *prey* divided by *lot*, because a smooth stone was used in casting the lots (Deuteronomy, 18. 8), "a portion" (Genesis, 14. 24). Therefore *translate* "He that delivers up his friend as a prey (which the conduct of my friends implies that they would do), even the eyes,"



etc. [NOYES.] (ch. II. 20). Job says this as to the sinner's *children*, retorting upon their reproach as to the cutting off of his (ch. 5. 4; 15. 30). This accords with the Old Testament dispensation of legal retribution (Exodus, 20. 5). 6. **He** — God. The poet reverentially suppresses the name of God, when speaking of calamities inflicted. **byword** — (Deuteronomy, 28. 37; Psalm 69. 11). My awful punishment makes my name execrated everywhere, as if I must have been superlatively bad to have earned it. **aforetime . . . tabret** — As David was honoured (I Samuel, 18. 6). Rather from a different *Hebrew* root, "I am treated to my face as an *object of disgust*," *Lit.*, an object to be spit upon in the face (Numbers, 12. 14). So *Raca* means (Matthew, 5. 22). [UMBREIT.] 7. (Psalm 6. 7; 31. 9; Deuteronomy, 34. 7). **members** — *lit.*, figures; all individual members being peculiar *forms* of the body: opposed to "shadow," which looks like a figure without solidity. 8. **astonied** — at my unmerited sufferings. **against the hypocrite** — The upright shall feel their sense of justice wounded ("will be indignant") because of the prosperity of the wicked. By "hypocrite" or "ungodly" he perhaps glances at his false friends. 9. The strength of religious principle is heightened by misfortune. The pious shall take fresh courage to persevere from the example of suffering Job. The image is from a warrior acquiring new courage in action (Isaiah, 40. 30, 31; Philippians, 1. 14). 10. "Return." If you have anything to advance really wise, though I doubt it, recommence your speech. For as yet I cannot find one wise man among you all. 11. Only do not vainly speak of the restoration of health to me; for "my days are past." **broken off** — As the threads of the web cut off from the loom (Isaiah, 38. 12). **thoughts** — *lit.*, possessions, *i.e.*, all the feelings and fair hopes which my heart once nourished. These belong to the *heart*, as "purposes" to the *understanding*: the two together here describe the entire inner man. 12. **They** — *viz.*, my friends would change the night into day, *i.e.*, would try to persuade me of the change of my misery into joy, which is impossible [UMBREIT] (ch. II. 17), (but) the life of prosperity (could it be enjoyed), would be short because of the darkness of adversity. Or better for "short," the *Hebrew* "near;" "and the light of new prosperity should be near in the face of (before) the darkness of death;" *i.e.*, they would persuade me that light is near, even though darkness approaches. 13. Rather, if I wait for this grave (schoel, or the unseen world), as my house, and make my bed in the darkness (*v.* 14), and say to corruption, rather, *to the pit*, or *grave*, etc., (*v.* 15). Where, then, is my hope? [UMBREIT.] The apodosis it at *v.* 15. 14. **Thou art my father, etc.** — Expressing most intimate connection (Proverbs, 7. 4). His diseased state made him closely akin to the grave and worm. 15. Who shall see it fulfilled? *viz.*, the "hope" (ch. II. 18), which they held out to him of restoration. 16. **They** — *viz.*, my hopes shall be buried with me. **bars** — (Isaiah, 38. 10). Rather, *the wastes*, or *solitudes* of the pit (schoel, the unseen world.) **rest together** — The rest of me and my hopes is in, etc. Both expire together. The word "rest" implies that man's ceaseless hopes only rob him of rest.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## SECOND SERIES.

**Ver. 1-21.** REPLY OF BILDAD. 2. **ye** — *The other two friends of Job*, whom Bildad charges with having spoken mere “words,” *i.e.*, empty speeches: opposed to “mark,” *i.e.*, come to *reason*, to consider the question *intelligently*: and then let us speak. 3. **beasts** — Alluding to what Job said (ch. 12. 7; so Isaiah, 1. 3). **vile** — Rather, from a *Hebrew* root to *stop up*. “Stubborn,” answering to the stupidity implied in the parallel first clause. [UMBREIT.] Why should we give occasion by your empty speeches for our being mutually reputed in the sight of Job, and one another, unintelligent? (ch. 17. 4, 10). 4. Rather, turning to Job, thou that tearest thyself in anger (ch. 5. 2). **be forsaken** — Become desolate. He alludes here to Job’s words as to the “rock,” etc., crumbling away (ch. 14. 18, 19); but in a different application. He says bitterly “for thee.” Wert thou not punished as thou art, and as thou art unwilling to bear, the eternal order of the universe would be disturbed, and the earth become desolate through unavenged wickedness. [UMBREIT.] Bildad takes it for granted Job is a great sinner (ch. 8. 3-6; Isaiah, 24. 5, 6). Shall that which stands fast as a rock be removed for your special accommodation? 5. That (*v.* 4,) cannot be. The decree of God is unalterable, the light (prosperity) of the wicked shall at length be put out. **his fire** — Alluding to Arabian hospitality, which prided itself on welcoming the stranger to the fire in the tent, and even lit fires to direct him to it. The ungodly shall be deprived of the means to show hospitality. His dwelling shall be dark and desolate! 6. **candle** — The *lamp* which, in the East, is usually fastened to the ceiling. Oil bounds in those regions, and the lamp was kept burning all night, as now in Egypt, where the poorest would rather dispense with food, than the night-lamp (Psalm 18. 28). To put out the lamp was an image of utter desolation. 7. “Steps of strength,” *Hebrew*, for *His strong steps*. A firm step marks health. To be straitened in steps is to be no longer able to move about at will (Proverbs, 4. 12). **his own counsel** — Or plans shall be the means of his fall. (ch. 5. 13). 8. **he walketh upon** — Rather, “he *lets himself go into the net*.” [UMBREIT.] If the *English Version* be retained, then understand “snare” to be the *pit-fall*, covered over with branches and earth, which, when walked upon give way (Psalm 9. 15; 35. 8). 9. **robber** — Rather answering to “gin” in the parallel clause, “the *noose* shall hold him fast.” [UMBREIT.] 11. **terrors** — Often mentioned in this book (*v.* 14; ch. 24. 17; etc.). The terrors excited through an evil conscience are here personified. “Magor-missabib,” (Jeremiah, 20. 3). **drive . . . to his feet** — Rather, shall pursue (*lit.*, scatter, Habakkuk, 3. 14), him close at his heels (*lit.*, immediately after his feet, Habakkuk, 3. 5; I Samuel, 25. 42; *Hebrew*). The image is that of a pursuing conqueror who scatters his enemy. [UMBREIT.] 12. The *Hebrew* is brief and bold, “his strength is hungry.” **destruction** — *i.e.*, a great calamity (Proverbs, 1. 27). **ready at his side** — Close at hand to destroy him

(Proverbs, 19. 29). UMBREIT has "he" for "it," *i.e.*, "in the rage of hunger he shall devour his own body:" or, *his own children* (Lamentations, 4. 16). Rather, "destruction" from the last verse is *nom.* to "devour." **strength** — Rather, "members" (*lit.*, the *branches* of a tree). **the first born of death** — A personification full of poetical horror. The first-born son held the chief place (Genesis, 49. 3); so here *the chiefest (most deadly) disease* that death has ever engendered (Isaiah, 14. 30; "first-born of the poor" — the poorest). The Arabs call fever "daughter of death." 14. **confidence** — All that the father trusted in domestic happiness, children, fortune, etc., referring to Job's losses. **rooted out** — Suddenly torn away. **it shall bring** — *i.e.*, he shall be brought: or as UMBREIT better has, "Thou (God) shalt bring him *slowly*." The *Hebrew* expresses, "to stride slowly and solemnly." The godless has a fearful death for long before his eyes, and is at last taken by it. Alluding to Job's case. The King of terrors, not like the heathen Pluto, the fabled ruler of the dead, but Death, with all its terrors to the ungodly, personified. 15. **it** — *Terror* shall haunt, etc., and not as UMBREIT *another*, which the last clause, of the verse disproves. **none of his** — It is his no longer. **brimstone** — Probably comparing the calamity of Job by the "fire of God" (ch. 1. 16), to the destruction of guilty Sodom by fire and brimstone (Genesis, 19. 24). 16. "Roots," himself. "Branch," his children (ch. 8. 12; 15. 30; Malachi, 4. 1). 17. **street** — Men shall not speak of him in meeting in the highways. Rather, in the field, or *meadow*; the shepherds shall no more mention his name. A picture from nomadic life. [UMBREIT.] 18. **light...darkness** — Existence — non-existence, 19. — **nephew** — (So Isaiah, 14. 28). But it is translated "grandson" (Genesis, 21. 23), *translate* "kinsman." 20. **after...before** — Rather, "those in the West — those in the East;" *i.e.*, all people; *lit.*, those behind — those before; for Orientals in geography turn with their face to the East (not to the North, as we), and back the West; so that *before* — East; *behind* — North (so Zechariah, 14. 8); **day** — Of ruin (Obadiah, 12). **affrighted** — Seized with terror (ch. 21. 6; Isaiah, 13. 8). 21. (ch. 8. 22. *Margin*).

## CHAPTER XIX.

## SECOND SERIES.

**Ver. 1-29.** JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD. 2. **How long, etc.** — Retorting Bildad's words (ch. 18. 2). Admitting the punishment to be deserved, is it kind thus ever to be harping on this to the sufferer? And yet even this they have not yet proved. 3. **Three** — Prefixed to numbers emphatically (Genesis, 27. 36). **ten** — *i.e.*, often (Genesis, 31. 9). **make yourselves strange** — Rather, *stun* me. [GESENIUS.] (See *Margin* for a different meaning.) 4. **erred** — The *Hebrew* expresses *unconscious error*. Job was unconscious of wilful sin. **remaineth** — *lit.*, *passeth the night*. An image from harbouring an unpleasant guest for the night. I bear the consequences, 5. **magnify, etc.** — Speak proudly (Obadiah, 12; Ezekiel, 35. 13). **against me** — Emphatically repeated (Psalm 38.

16). **plead . . . reproach** — *English Version* makes this part of the Pro-tasis “if” being understood, and the apodosis beginning at *v.* 6. Better, with UMBREIT, If ye would become great heroes against me in truth, ye must *prove* (evince) against me my *guilt*, or *shame*, which you assert. In the *English Version* “reproach” will mean Job’s *calamities*, which they “pleaded” against him as a “reproach,” or proof of guilt. 6. **compassed . . . net** — Alluding to Bildad’s words (ch. 18. 8). Know, that it is not that *I* as a wicked man have been caught in my “own net;” *it is God* who has compassed me in His — why, I know not. 7. **wrong** — Violence: brought on him by God. **no judgment** — God will not remove my calamities, and so vindicate my just cause: and my friends will not do *justice* to my past character. 8. Image from a benighted traveller. 9. **stripped . . . crown** — Image from a deposed king, deprived of his *robes* and *crown*; appropriate to Job, once an emir with all but royal dignity (Lamentations, 5. 16; Psalm 89. 39). 10. **destroyed . . . on every side** — “Shaken all round, so that I fall in the dust;” image from a tree uprooted by violent shaking from every side. [UMBREIT.] The last clause accords with this (Jeremiah, 1. 10). **mine hope** — As to this life (in opposition to Zophar, ch. 11. 18); not as to the world to come, (*v.* 25; ch. 14. 15). **removed** — Uprooted. 11. **enemies** — (ch. 13. 24; Lamentations, 2. 5). 12. **troops** — Calamities advance together like hostile troops (ch. 10. 17). **raise up . . . way** — An army must *cast up a way* of access before it, in marching against a city (Isaiah, 40. 3). 13. **brethren** — *Nearest kinsmen*, as distinguished from “acquaintance.” So “kinsfolk” and “familiar friends” (*v.* 14) correspond in parallelism. The Arabic proverb is, “The brother, *i.e.*, the true friend is only known in the time of need.” **estranged** — *lit.*, turn away with disgust. Job again unconsciously uses language prefiguring the desertion of Jesus Christ (ch. 16. 10; Luke, 23. 49; Psalm 38. 11). 15. **They that dwell, etc.** — Rather, *sojourn*; male-servants, *sojourning* in his house. Mark the contrast. The stranger admitted to sojourn as a dependent treats the master as a stranger in his own house. 16. **servant** — Born in my house (as distinguished from those *sojourning* in it), and so altogether belonging to the family. Yet even he disobeys my call. **mouth** — *i.e.*, calling aloud; formerly a *nod* was enough. Now I no longer look for *obedience*, I try *entreaty*. 17. **strange** — His *breath* by elephantiasis had become so *strongly altered* and offensive, that his wife turned away as *estranged* from him (*v.* 13; ch. 17. 1). **children . . . of mine own body** — *lit.*, *belly*. But “loins” is what we should expect, not “belly,” (womb) which applies to the woman. The “mine” forbids it being taken of his wife. Their children besides were dead. In ch. 3. 10, the same words “my womb” mean, *my mother’s womb*: therefore, *translate*, “and I must entreat (as a suppliant) the children of my mother’s womb;” *i.e.*, my own brothers. A heightening of force, as compared with last clause of *v.* 16. [UMBREIT.] Not only must I entreat suppliantly my *servant*, but my own *brothers* (Psalm 69. 8). Here, too, he unconsciously foreshadows Jesus Christ (John, 7. 5). 18. **young children** — So the *Hebrew* means (ch. 21. 11). Reverence for age is a chief duty in the East. The word means “wicked” (ch. 16. 11). So UMBREIT has it here, not so well. **I arose** — Rather, supply “if,” as Job was no more in a state to stand up. “If I stood up (arose) they would speak against

(abuse) me." [UMBREIT.] 19. **inward** — *Confidential* : *lit.*, "men of my secret" — to whom I entrusted my most intimate confidence. 20. Extreme meagreness. The bone seemed to stick to the skin, being seen through it, owing to the flesh drying up and falling away from the bone. The *Margin*, "as to my flesh," makes this sense clearer. The *English Version* however expresses the same: "And to my flesh," *viz.*, which has fallen away from the bone, instead of firmly covering it. **skin of my teeth** — Proverbial. I have *escaped with* bare life; I am whole *only with the skin of my teeth, i.e.*, my gums alone are whole, the rest of the skin of my body is broken with sores (ch. 7. 5; Psalm 102. 5). Satan left Job speech, in hope that he might therewith curse God. 21. When God had made him such a piteous spectacle, his friends should spare him the additional persecution of their cruel speeches. 22. **As God** — has persecuted me. Prefiguring Jesus Christ (Psalm 69. 26). That God afflicts, is no reason that man is to add to a sufferer's affliction (Zechariah, 1. 15). **satisfied with my flesh** — It is not enough that God afflicts my flesh literally (*v.* 20), but you must "eat my flesh" metaphorically (Psalm 27. 2); *i.e.*, *utter the worst calumnies*, as the phrase often means in Arabic. 23. Despairing of justice from his friends in his lifetime, he wishes his words could be preserved imperishably to posterity, attesting his hope of vindication at the resurrection. **printed** — Not our modern printing, but *engraven*. **pen** — Graver. **lead** — poured into the engraven characters, to make them better seen. [UMBREIT.] Not on *leaden plates*; for it was "in the rock" that they were engraved. Perhaps it was the *hammer* that was of "lead," as sculptors find more delicate incisions are made by it than by a harder hammer. FOSTER (*One Primev. Lang.*) has shown, that the inscriptions on the rocks in Wady-Mokatta, along Israel's route through the desert, record the journeys of that people, as Cosmas Indicopleustes asserted, 535 A.D. 24. **for ever** — As long as the rock lasts. 25. **Redeemer** — UMBREIT, etc., understand this and *v.* 26, of God appearing as Job's Avenger *before his death*, when his body would be wasted to a skeleton. But Job uniformly despairs of restoration and vindication of his cause in this life (ch. 17. 15, 16). One hope alone was left, which the Spirit revealed, a vindication in a future life: it would be no full vindication, if his soul alone were to be happy *without the body*: as some explain (*v.* 26), "out of the flesh." It was his body that had chiefly suffered: the resurrection of his body, therefore, alone could vindicate his cause; to see God with *his own eyes*, and in a renovated body (*v.* 27), would disprove the imputation of guilt cast on him because of the sufferings of his present body. That this truth is not further dwelt on by Job, or noticed by his friends, only shows that it was *with him* a bright passing glimpse of *Old Testament hope*, rather than the steady light of *Gospel assurance*; *with us* this passage has a definite clearness, which it had not in *his* mind (see Note 21. 30). The idea in "Redeemer" with Job is *Vindicator* (ch. 16. 19; Numbers, 35. 27), redressing his wrongs; also including at least *with us*, and probably *with him*, the idea of the predicted Bruiser of the Serpent's head. Tradition would inform him of the prediction. FOSTER shows that the fall by the serpent is represented perfectly on the Temple of Osiris at Phylæ: and the resurrection on the tomb of the Egyptian Mycerinus, dating 4000 years back. Job's sacrifices imply sense of sin and need of atonement.

Satan was the Injurer of Job's body: Jesus Christ his Vindicator, the Living one, who giveth life (John, 5. 21, 26). **at the latter day**— Rather, "the Last," the peculiar title of Jesus Christ, though Job may not have known the pregnancy of his own inspired words, and may have understood merely *one that comes after* (1 Corinthians, 15. 45; Revelation, 1. 17). Jesus Christ is *the last*. The day of Jesus Christ *the last day* (John, 6. 39). **stand**— Rather, *arise*. As God is said to "raise up" the Messiah (Jeremiah, 23. 5; Deuteronomy, 18. 15). **earth**— Rather, *dust*: often associated with the body crumbling away in it (ch. 7. 21; 17. 16): therefore appropriately here. *Above* that very *dust* wherewith was mingled man's decaying body, shall man's Vindicator arise. "Arise above the dust," strikingly expresses that fact that Jesus Christ *arose* first Himself *above the dust*, and then is to *raise* His people *above* it (1 Corinthians, 15. 20, 23). The Spirit intended in Job's words more than Job fully understood (1 Peter, 1. 12). Though he *seems*, in forsaking me, to be as one *dead*; He now truly "liveth" in heaven; hereafter He shall appear also above the *dust* of earth. The Goel or Vindicator of blood was the nearest kinsman of the slain. So Jesus Christ took our flesh, to be our kinsman. Man lost life by Satan the "murderer" (John 8. 44), here Job's persecutor (Hebrews, 2. 14). Compare also as to *redemption of the inheritance* by the kinsman of the dead (Ruth, 4. 3-5; Ephesians, 1. 14). 26. Rather, "though after my skin (is no more) this (body) is destroyed," "body" being omitted, because it was so wasted as not to deserve the name), yet *from* my flesh (*from my renewed body*, as the starting point of vision (Song of Solomon, 2. 9); "looking out *from* the windows") "shall I see God." Next clause proves that *bodily* vision is meant, for it specifies "mine eyes." [ROSENMULLER, 2nd Ed.] The *Hebrew* opposes "*in* my flesh." The "skin" was the first destroyed by elephantiasis, then the "body." 27. **for myself**— For my advantage, as my friend. **not another**— Mine eyes shall behold Him but *no longer* as one *estranged* from me, as now. [BENGEL.] **though**— Better omitted: my reins (inward recesses of the heart) are consumed within me, *i.e.*, pine with longing desire for that day (Psalm 84. 2; 119. 81). The Gentiles had but few revealed promises: how gracious that the few should have been so explicit (cf. Numbers, 24. 17; Matthew, 2. 2). 28. Rather, ye will then (when the Vindicator cometh) say, Why, etc. **root. . . in me**— The root of pious integrity, which was the *matter* at issue, whether it could be in one so afflicted, is found in me [UMBREIT] with many MSS. and versions reads "in him." "Or how found we in him *ground of contention*." 29. "Wrath (the passionate violence with which the friends persecuted Job) bringeth," etc., *lit.*, *is sin of the sword*. **that ye may know**— Supply, "I say this." **judgment**— Inseparably connected with the coming of the Vindicator. The "wrath" of God at His appearing for the temporal vindication of Job against the friends (ch. 42. 7), is a pledge of the eternal wrath at the final coming to glorify the saints and *judge* their enemies (2 Thessalonians, 1. 6-10; Isaiah, 25. 8).

## CHAPTER XX.

## SECOND SERIES.

**Ver. 1-29.** REPLY OF ZOPHAR. 2. **Therefore** — Rather, the more excited I feel by Job's speech, the more *for that very reason* shall my reply be supplied by my calm consideration. *Lit.*, "Notwithstanding; my calm thoughts (as in ch. 4. 13) shall furnish my answer, because of the excitement (haste) within me." [UMBREIT.] 3. **check of my reproach** — *i.e.*, the castigation intended as a reproach (*lit.*, shame) to **spirit of... understanding** — My rational spirit; answering to "calm thoughts" (*v.* 2). In spite of thy reproach urging me to "hastiness," I will answer in calm reason. 5. **hypocrite** — *lit.*, *the ungodly* (Psalm 37. 35, 36). 6. (Isaiah, 14. 13; Obadiah, 3. 4). 7. **dung** — In contrast to the haughtiness of the sinner (*v.* 6); this strong term expresses disgust and the lowest degradation (Psalm 83. 10; 1 Kings, 14. 10). 8. (Psalm 73. 20). 9. Rather. "the eye followeth him, but can *discern* him no more." A *sharp-looking* is meant (ch. 28. 7; cf. ch. 7. 10). 10. **seek to please** — "Atone to the poor" (by restoring the property of which they had been robbed by the father). [DE WETTE.] Better than *English Version*, "The children" are reduced to the humiliating condition of seeking the favour of those very poor, whom the father had oppressed. But UMBREIT translates as *Margin*. **his hands** — Rather, *their* (the children's) hands. **their goods** — The goods of the poor. Righteous retribution! (Exodus, 20. 5) 11. (Psalm 25. 7); so *Vulgate*. GESENIUS has "full of youth;" *viz.*, *in the fulness of his useful strength* he shall be laid *in the dust*. But "bones" plainly alludes to Job's disease, probably to Job's own words (ch. 19. 20). UMBREIT translates "full of his *secret* sins," as in Psalm 90. 8; his secret guilt in his time of seeming righteousness, like secret poison, at last lays him in the dust. The *English Version* is best. Zophar alludes to Job's own words (ch. 17. 16). **with him** — His sin had so pervaded his nature that it accompanies him to the grave: for eternity the sinner cannot get rid of it (Revelation, 22. 11). 12. **be** — "*Taste sweet.*" Sin's fascination is like poison sweet to the taste, but at last deadly to the vital organs (Proverbs, 20. 17; ch. 9. 17, 18). **hide... tongue** — Seek to prolong the enjoyment by keeping the sweet morsel longer in the mouth (so *v.* 13). 14. **turned** — The *Hebrew* denotes a total change into a disagreeable contrary (Jeremiah, 2. 21; cf. Revelation, 10. 9, 10). **gall** — In which the poison of the asp was thought to lie. It rather is contained in a sack in the mouth. Scripture uses popular language, where no moral truth is thereby endangered. 15. He is forced to disgorge his ill-gotten wealth. 16. **shall suck** — It shall turn out that he has sucked the poison, etc. 17. **floods** — *lit.*, *streams of floods*, plentiful streams flowing with milk, etc. (ch. 29. 6; Exodus, 3. 17). Honey and butter are more fluid in the East than with us, and are poured out from jars. These "rivers" or *water brooks* are in the sultry East emblems of prosperity. 18. Image from food which is taken away from one before he can swallow it. **restitution** — (So Proverbs, 6. 31). The parallelism favors the *English Version* rather than the *translation* of GESENIUS,

"As a possession to be restored in which he rejoices not." **he shall not rejoice** — His enjoyment of his ill-gotten gains shall then be at an end (v. 5). 19. **oppressed** — Whereas he ought to have espoused their cause (2 Chronicles, 16. 10). **forsaken** — Left helpless. **house** — Thus leaving the poor without shelter (Isaiah, 5. 8; Micah, 2. 2). 20. UMBREIT translates "his inward parts know no rest" from desires. **his belly** — *i.e.*, peace *inwardly*. **not save** — *lit.*, "not *escape* with that which," etc. Alluding to Job's having been stripped of his all. 21. **look for** — Rather, *because* his goods, *i.e.*, prosperity *shall have* no *endurance*. 22. **shall be** — Rather, "he is (feeleth) straitened." The next clause explains in what respect. **wicked** — Rather, "the whole hand of the *miserable* (whom he had oppressed) cometh upon him;" viz., the sense of his having oppressed the poor, now in turn comes with all its power (hand) on him. This causes his "straitened" feeling even in prosperity. 23. Rather, "God shall cast (may God send) [UMBREIT] upon him the fury of His wrath *to fill his belly!*" **while eating** — Rather, "Shall rain it upon him *for his food!*" Fiery rain, *i.e.*, lightning (Psalm 11. 6; alluding to Job's misfortune, ch. 1. 16). The force of the image is felt by picturing to one's self the opposite nature of a refreshing rain in the desert (Exodus, 16. 4; Psalm 68. 9). 24. **steel** — Rather, "brass." Whilst the wicked flees from one danger, he falls into a greater one from an opposite quarter. [UMBREIT.] 25. **it is drawn** — Rather, "He (God) draweth (the sword, Joshua, 5. 13), and (no sooner has He done so than) it cometh out of (*i.e.*, passes right through) the (sinner's) body" (Deuteronomy, 32. 41, 42; Ezekiel, 21. 9, 10). The *glittering* sword is a happy image for *lightning*. **gall** — *i.e.*, his life (ch. 16. 13). "Inflicts a deadly wound." **terrors** — Zophar repeats Bildad's words (ch. 17. 11; Psalm 88. 16; 55. 4). 26. "All darkness," *i.e.*, every calamity that befalls the wicked shall be *hid* (in store for him) *in His* (God's) *secret places* or treasures (Jude 13; Deuteronomy, 32. 34). **not blown** — Not kindled by man's hands, but by God's (Isaiah, 30. 33; LXX. in ALEXANDRIAN MS. read "unquenchable fire" Matthew, 3. 12). Tact is shown by the friends in not expressly mentioning, but *alluding*, under colour of general cases, to Job's calamities; here (ch. 1. 16) UMBREIT explains it, *wickedness* is a "self-igniting fire;" in it lie the principles of destruction. **ill... tabernacle** — Every trace of the sinner must be obliterated (ch. 18. 15). 27. All creation is at enmity with him, and proclaims his guilt, which he would fain conceal. 28. **increase** — Prosperity. **Ill got** — ill gone. **flow away** — like waters that run dry in summer; using Job's own metaphor against himself (ch. 6. 15-17; 2 Samuel, 14. 14; Micah, 1. 4). **his wrath** — God's. **appointed** — Not as a matter of chance, but by the Divine "decree" (*Margin*) and settled principle.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## SECOND SERIES.

**Ver. 1-34.** JOB'S ANSWER. 2. **consolations** — If you will listen calmly to me, this will be regarded as "consolations;" alluding to Eli-



phaz' boasted "consolations" (ch. 15. 11), which Job felt more as aggravations ("mockings," *v.* 3) than consolations (ch. 16. 2). 3. *Lit.*, "Begin your mockings" (ch. 17. 2). Job's difficulty was not as to *man*, but as to *God*, why He so afflicted him, as if he were the guilty hypocrite which the friends alleged him to be. VULGATE translates it, "my disputation." **if it were**—Rather, since this is the case. 5. **lay...hand upon...mouth**—(Proverbs, 30. 32; Judges, 18. 19). So the heathen god of silence was pictured with his hand on his mouth. There was enough in Job's case to awe them into silence (ch. 17. 8). 6. **remember**—Think on it. Can you wonder that I broke out into complaints, when the struggle was not with men but with the Almighty! Reconcile, if you can, the ceaseless woes of the innocent with the Divine justice! Is it not enough to make one tremble? [UMBREIT.] 7. The answer is (Romans, 2. 4; 1 Timothy, 1. 16; Psalm 73. 18; Ecclesiastes, 8. 11-13; Luke, 2. 35 end; Proverbs, 16. 4; Romans, 9. 22). **old**—In opposition to the friends who asserted that sinners are "cut off" early (ch. 8. 12, 14). 8. In opposition to (ch. 18. 19; 5. 4). 9. *Lit.*, *peace from fear*: with poetic force. Their house is *peace itself* far removed from fear. Opposed to the friends' assertion as to the bad (ch. 15. 21-24; 20. 26-28), and conversely, the good (ch. 5. 23, 24). 10. Rather, their *cattle conceive*. The first clause of the verse describes an easy *conception*, the second, a happy *birth*. [UMBREIT.] 11. "Send forth," *viz.*, out of doors, to their happy sports under the skies, like a joyful flock sent to the pastures. **little ones**—Like lambkins. **children**—Somewhat older than the former. **dance**—Not formal dances: but skip, like lambs, in joyous and healthful play. 12. **take**—Rather, *lift up the voice* (sing) to the note of. [UMBREIT.] **timbrel**—Rather, *tambourine*. **organ**—Not the modern "organ," but the "pipe" (Genesis, 4. 21). The first class refers to stringed, the latter to wind instruments; thus, with "the voice" all kinds of music are enumerated. 13. **wealth**—Old *English Version* for *prosperity*. **in a moment**—Not by a lingering disease. Great blessings! Lengthened life with prosperity, and a sudden painless death (Psalm 73. 4). 14. **therefore**—Rather, *And yet* they are such as say, etc., *i.e.*, *say*, not in so many words, but virtually by their conduct (so the Gergesenes, Matthew, 8. 34). How differently the godly (Isaiah, 2. 3). **ways**—The *course of action* which God points out; as in Psalm 50. 23; *Margin*. 15. (cf. Jeremiah, 2. 10; *Margin*; Proverbs, 30. 9; Exodus, 5. 2). **what profit**—(ch. 35. 3; Malachi, 3. 14; Psalm 73. 13). Sinners ask not what is *right*, but what is for the *profit of self*. They forget, "if religion cost self something, the want of it will cost self infinitely more." 16. **not in their hand**—But in the hand of God. This is Job's difficulty, that God who has sinners' prosperity (good) in His hand should allow them to have it. **is**—Rather, "may the counsel of the wicked be far from me!" [UMBREIT.] This naturally follows the sentiment of the first clause: Let me not hereby be thought to regard with aught but horror the ways of the wicked, however prosperous. 17. Job in this whole passage down to 21 quotes the assertion of the friends as to the short continuance of the sinner's prosperity, not his own sentiments. In 22 he proceeds to refute them. "How oft is the candle" (lamp), etc., quoting Bildad's sentiment (ch. 18. 5, 6), in order to question its truth (cf. Matthew, 25.

8). **how off**—“God distributeth,” etc. (alluding to ch. 20. 23, 29). **sorrows**—UMBREIT translates “snares,” *lit.*, *cords*, which lightning in its twining motion resembles (Psalm 11. 6). 18. Job alludes to a like *sentiment* of Bildad (ch. 18. 18), using his own previous *words* (ch. 13. 25). Equally questionable is the friends’ assertion, that if the godless himself is not punished, the children are (ch. 18. 19; 20. 10); and that *God rewardeth him* here for his iniquity, and that *he shall know* it to his cost. So “know” (Hosea, 9. 7). 20. Another questionable assertion of the friends, that the sinner sees his own and his children’s destruction in his life-time. **drink**—(Psalm 11. 6; Isaiah, 51. 17; Lamentations, 4. 21). 21. The argument of the friends, in proof of *v.* 20, What pleasure can he have from his house (children) when he is dead—(“after him;” Ecclesiastes, 3. 22). **when the number, etc.**—(ch. 14. 21). Or, rather, *What hath he to do with his children, etc.?* (so the *Hebrew* in Ecclesiastes, 3. 1; 8. 6). It is therefore necessary “*his eyes should see* his and their destruction.” **cut off**—Rather, When the number of his *allotted* months is *fulfilled* (ch. 14. 5). From an Arabic word, *arrow*, which was used to draw lots with. Hence *arrow*—inevitable destiny. [UMBREIT.] 22. Reply of Job, “In all these assertions you try to teach God how He *ought* to deal with men, rather than prove that He does *in fact* so deal with them. Experience is against you. God gives prosperity and adversity as it pleases him, not as man’s wisdom would have it, on principles inscrutable to us” (Isaiah, 40. 13; Romans, 11. 34). **those. . . high**—The high ones, not only angels, but men (Isaiah, 2. 12-17). 23. *Lit.*, in the bone of his perfection, *i.e.*, the full strength of unimpaired prosperity. [UMBREIT.] 24. **breasts**—Rather, skins or *vessels* for fluids. [LEE.] But [UMBREIT] “stations or resting-places of his herds near water:” in opposition to Zophar (ch. 20. 17); the first clause refers to his abundant substance, the second to his vigorous health. **moistened**—Comparing man’s body to a well-watered field (Proverbs, 3. 8; Isaiah, 58. 11). 26. (Ecclesiastes, 9. 2). 27. Their wrongful thoughts against Job are stated by him in *v.* 28. They do not honestly *name* Job, but *insinuate* his guilt. 28. **ye say**—referring to Zophar (ch. 20. 7). **the house**—referring to the fall of the *house* of Job’s eldest son (ch. 1. 19) and the destruction of his *family*. **prince**—The parallel “wicked” in the second clause requires this to be taken in a bad sense, *tyrant*, *oppressor* (Isaiah, 13. 2), the same *Hebrew*, “nobles”—oppressors. **dwelling-places**—Rather, *pavilions*, *lit.*, a tent containing many dwellings, such as a great emir, like Job, with many dependents, would have. 29. Job seeing that the friends will not admit him as an impartial judge, as they consider his calamities prove his guilt, begs them to ask the opinion of travellers (Lamentations, 1. 12), who have the experience drawn from observation, and who are no way connected with him. Job opposes this to Bildad (ch. 8. 8) and Zophar (ch. 20. 4). **tokens**—Rather, *intimations* (*ex. gr.*, inscriptions, proverbs, *signifying* the results of their observation, *testimony*. *Lit.*, *signs* or proofs in confirmation of the word spoken (Isaiah, 7. 11). 30. Their testimony (referring perhaps to those who had visited the region where Abraham who enjoyed a revelation then lived) is, that “the wicked is (now) spared (*reserved*) against the day of destruction” (hereafter). The *Hebrew* does not so well agree with

[UMBREIT] "in the day of destruction." Job does not deny sinners' future punishment, but their punishment *in this life*. They have their "good things" *now*. Hereafter their lot, and that of the godly, shall be reversed (Luke, 16. 25). Job, by the Spirit, often utters truths which solve the difficulty under which he laboured. His afflictions mostly clouded his faith, else he would have seen the solution furnished by his own words. This answers the objection, that if he knew of the Resurrection in ch. 19. 25, and future retribution (ch. 21. 30). why did he not draw his reasonings elsewhere from them, which he does not? God's righteous government, however, needs to be vindicated as to *this life*, also, and therefore the Holy Ghost has caused the argument mainly to turn on it, at the same time giving glimpses of a future fuller vindication of God's ways. **brought forth** — Not "carried away safe" or "escape" (referring to *this life*), as UMBREIT has it. **wrath** — *lit.*, "wraths," *i.e.*, multiplied and fierce wrath. 31. *i.e.*, who dares to charge him openly with his bad ways? *viz.*, in this present life. He shall, I grant (*v.* 30), be "repaid" hereafter. 32. **yet** — Rather, *and*. **brought** — With solemn pomp (Psalm 45. 15). **grave** — *lit.*, *graves*, *i.e.*, the place where the graves are. **remain in** — Rather, *watch on* the tomb, or sepulchral mound. Even after death he seems still to live and *watch* (*i.e.*, have his "remembrance" preserved) by means of the monument over the grave. In opposition to Bildad (ch. 18. 17). 33. As the classic saying has it, "The earth is light upon him." His repose shall be "sweet." **draw** — follow. He shall share the common lot of mortals: no worse off than they (Hebrews, 9. 27). UMBREIT not so well (for it is not true of "every man." "Most men follow in his bad steps, as countless such preceded him." 34. **falsehood** — *lit.*, wickedness. Your boasted "consolations" (ch. 15. 11) are contradicted by facts ("vain"), they therefore only betray your *evil intent* ("wickedness") against me.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THIRD SERIES.

**Ver. 1-30.** AS BEFORE, ELIPHAZ BEGINS. 1. Eliphaz shows, that man's goodness does not add to, or man's badness take from the happiness of God: therefore it cannot be that God sends prosperity to some, and calamities on others, for his own advantage: the cause of the goods and ills sent must lie in the men themselves (Psalm 16. 2; Luke, 17. 10; Acts, 17. 25; 1 Chronicles, 29. 14). So Job's calamities must arise from guilt. Eliphaz instead of meeting the *facts*, tries to show that it *could not* be so. 2. **as he that is wise** — Rather, *yea* the *pious* man profiteth himself. So "understanding" or "wise" — *pious* (Daniel, 12. 3, 10; Psalm 14. 2). [MICHAELIS.] 3. **pleasure** — Accession of happiness: God has pleasure in man's righteousness (Psalm 45. 7), but he is not dependent on man's character for His happiness. 4. Is the punishment inflicted on thee from fear of thee, in order to disarm thee? as Job had implied (Notes, 7. 12, 20; 10. 17). **will he... enter into judgment?** — Job had desired this (ch. 13. 3, 21). He ought rather have spoken as

(Psalm 143. 2). 5. Heretofore Eliphaz had only insinuated, now he plainly asserts Job's guilt, merely on the ground of his sufferings. 6. The crimes alleged, on a harsh inference, by Eliphaz against Job are such as he would think likely to be committed by a rich man. The Mosaic law (Exodus, 22. 26; Deuteronomy, 24. 10), subsequently embodied the feeling that existed among the godly in Job's time against oppression of debtors as to their pledges. Here the case is not quite the same; Job is charged with taking a pledge where he had *no just claim to it*: and in the second clause, that pledge (*the outer garment* which served the poor as a covering by day, and a bed by night) is represented as taken from one who had not "changes of raiment" (a common constituent of wealth in the East) but was *poorly-clad*—"naked" (Matthew 25. 36; James, 2. 15): a sin the more heinous in a rich man like Job. 7. Hospitality to the weary traveller is regarded in the East as a primary duty (Isaiah, 21. 14). 8. **mighty**—*Hebrew*, "man of arm" (Psalm 10. 15; viz., Job). **honourable**—*Hebrew*, *accepted of countenance* (Isaiah, 3. 3; 2 Kings, 5. 1), *i.e.*, possessing authority. Eliphaz repeats his charge (ch. 15. 28; so Zophar, ch. 20. 19), that it was by violence Job wrung houses and lands from the poor, to whom now he refused relief (*v.* 7. 9). [MICHAELIS.] 9. **empty**—Without their wants being relieved (Genesis, 31. 42). The Mosaic law especially protected the widow and fatherless (Exodus, 22. 22); the violation of it in their case by the great is a complaint of the prophets (Isaiah, 1. 17). **arms**—Supports, helps, on which one leans (Hosea, 7. 15). Thou hast robbed them of their only stay. Job replies in (ch. 29. 11-16). 10. **snare**—Alluding to Job's admission (ch. 19. 6; cf. ch. 18. 10; Proverbs, 22. 5). 11. **that**—*So that* thou. **abundance**—floods. Danger by floods is a less frequent image in this book than in the rest of the Old Testament (ch. 11. 16; 27. 20). 12. Eliphaz says this to prove that God can from His height behold all things; gratuitously *inferring* that Job denied it, because he denied that the wicked are punished here. **height**—*Hebrew*, *head*, *i.e.*, elevation (ch. 11. 8). 13. Rather, *and yet* thou sayest, God does not *concern himself with* ("know") human affairs (Psalm 73. 11). 14. "In the circuit of heaven" only, not taking any part in earthly affairs. Job is alleged as holding this epicurean sentiment (Lamentations, 3. 44; Isaiah, 29. 15; 40. 57; Jeremiah, 23. 24; Ezekiel, 8. 12; Psalm 139. 12). 15. **marked**—Rather, dost thou *keep to?* *i.e.*, wish to follow (so *Hebrew*, 2 Samuel, 22. 22). If so, beware of sharing their **old way**—The degenerate ways of the world before the flood (Genesis, 6. 5). 16. **cut down**—Rather, "fettered," as in ch. 16. 8; *i.e.*, arrested by death. **out of time**—Prematurely, suddenly: (ch. 15. 32; Ecclesiastes, 7. 17). *lit.*, whose foundation was poured out (so as to become) a stream or flood. The solid earth passed from beneath their feet into a flood (Genesis, 7. 11). Eliphaz designedly uses Job's own words (ch. 21. 14, 15). **do for them**—They think they can do everything for themselves. 18. "Yet" you say (ch. 21. 16, see Note) that it is "*He* who filled their houses with good"—"their" "good is not in *their* hand," but comes from *God*. **but the counsel...is, etc.**—Rather, may the counsel be, etc. Eliphaz sarcastically quotes in continuation Job's word (ch. 21. 16). Yet, after uttering this godless sentiment, thou dost hypocritically add. "May the counsel," etc. 19. Tri-

umph of the pious at the fall of the recent followers of the antediluvian sinners. Whilst in the act of denying that God can do them any good or harm, they are cut off by Him. Eliphaz hereby justifies himself and the friends for their conduct to Job: not derision of the wretched, but joy at the vindication of God's ways (Psalm 107. 42; Revelations, 15. 3; 16. 7; 19. 1, 2). 20. The triumphant speech of the pious. If "substance" be retained, *translate*, rather as LXX., "has not their substance been taken away, and," etc.? But the *Hebrew* is rather, "Truly our *adversary* is cut down." [GESENIUS.] The same opposition exists between the godly and ungodly seed, as between the unfallen and restored Adam and Satan (*adversary*); this founds the groundwork of the book (chs. 1 and 2.; Genesis, 3. 15). **remnant** — All that "is left" of the sinner: repeated from (ch. 20. 26), which makes UMBREIT's rendering "glory" (*Marg.*), "excellency" less probable. **fire** — Alluding to Job (ch. 1. 16; 15. 34; 18. 15). 21. First is mentioned destruction by *water* (v. 16); here, by *fire* (2 Peter, 3. 5-7). Eliphaz takes it for granted, Job is not yet "acquainted" with God: *let.*, become a *companion* of God. Turn with familiar confidence to God. **and be** — *So thou shalt be*: the 2nd *imperatively* expresses the consequence of obeying the 1st (Psalm 37. 27). **peace** — prosperity and restoration to *Job*.; true spiritually also to *us* (Romans, 5. 1; Colossians, 1. 20). **God** — (1 Timothy, 4. 8). 22. **lay up** — (Psalm 119. 11). 23. "Built up" anew, as a *restored* house. **thou shalt put away** — Rather, *if* thou put away. [MICHAELIS.] 24. Rather, containing the protasis from the last clause of v. 23, *If thou regard th: glittering metal as dust, lit., lay on the dust*; to regard it of as little value as the dust on which it lies. The apodosis is at v. 25, *Then shall the Almighty be*, etc. God will take the place of the wealth, in which thou didst formerly trust. **gold** — Rather, "precious" or "glittering metal," parallel to "(gold) of Ophir," in the second clause. [UMBREIT & MAURER.] **Ophir** — Derived from a *Hebrew* word — *dust*, viz., gold dust. HEEREN thinks it a general name for the rich countries of the South, on the African, Indian, and especially the Arabian coast, (where was the port Apar. El Ophir, too, a city of Oman, was formerly the centre of Arabian commerce). It is curious, the natives of Malacca still call their mines *Ophirs*. **stones of the brooks** — *If thou dost let the gold of Ophir remain in its native valley among the stones of the brooks; i.e., regard it as of little worth as the stones*, etc. The gold was washed down by mountain torrents and lodged among the stones and sand of the valley. 25. Apodosis. **yea** — Rather, *Then shall the Almighty be*, etc. **defense** — Rather, as the same *Hebrew* means in v. 24 (see note),—*Thy precious metals*; God will be to thee in the place of riches. **plenty of silver** — Rather, "And shall be to thee in the place of *laboriously obtained treasures of silver*." [GESENIUS.] Elegantly implying, it is less labour to find God than the hidden metals; at least to the humble seeker (ch. 28. 12-28). But [MAURER], "the shining silver." 26. **lift up . . . face, etc.** — Repeated from Zophar (ch. 11. 15). 27. (Isaiah, 58. 9, 14). **pay thy vows** — Which thou has promised to God in the event of thy prayers being heard: God will give thee occasion to pay the former by hearing the latter. 28. **light** — Success. 29. Rather, when (*thy ways*); from v. 28), **are cast down (for a time)**, thou shalt (soon again have joyful cause

to) say, There is lifting up (prosperity returns back to me). [MAURER.] **he** — God. **humble** — *Hebrew*, him that is of low eyes. . Eliphaz implies, that Job is not so now in his affliction ; therefore it continues : with this he contrasts the blessed effect of being humble under it (James, 4. 6 ; and 1 Peter, 5. 5, probably quote this passage). Therefore, it is better, I think, to take the first clause as referred to by " God resisteth the *proud*." When (men) are cast down, thou shalt say, (behold the effects of) *pride*. Eliphaz hereby justifies himself for attributing Job's calamities to his *pride*. " Giveth grace to the humble," answers to the second clause. 30. **island** — *i.e.*, dwelling. But the *Hebrew* expresses the *negative* (1 Samuel, 4. 21), *translate* " Thus He (God) shall deliver him who was *not* guiltless," *viz.*, one, who like Job himself on conversion shall be saved, but not because he was, as Job so constantly affirms of himself, guiltless, but because he *humbles* himself (*v.* 29), an oblique attack on Job, even to the last. **and it** — Rather, "*he* (the one *not* heretofore guiltless) shall be delivered through the purity (acquired since conversion) of thy hands ;" by thy intercession (as Genesis, 18. 26, etc). [MAURER.] The irony is strikingly exhibited in Eliphaz unconsciously uttering words which exactly answer to what happened at last : he and the other two were " delivered " by God accepting the intercession of Job for them (ch. 42. 7, 8).

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THIRD SERIES.

**Ver. 1-17.** JOB'S ANSWER. 2. **to-day** — Implying, perhaps, that the debate was carried on through more days than one (see Introduction). **bitter** — (ch. 7. 11 ; 10. 1). **my stroke** — The *hand* of God *on me* (*margin* ; ch. 19. 21 ; Psalm 32. 4). **heavier than** — Is so heavy that I cannot relieve myself adequately by groaning. 8. The same wish as in ch. 13. 3, (cf. Hebrews, 10. 19-22). **seat** — The idea in the *Hebrew* is *a well-prepared throne* (Psalm 9. 7). 4. **order** — State methodically (ch. 13. 18 ; Isaiah, 43. 26). **filii, etc.** — I would have abundance of arguments to adduce. 5. **he** — Emphatic : it little matters what *man* may say of me, if only I know what *God* judges of me. 6. An objection suggests itself, whilst he utters the wish (*v.* 5). Do I hereby wish, that he should plead against me with His omnipotence ? Far from it ! (ch. 9. 19, 34 ; 13. 21 ; 30. 18). **strength** — So as to prevail with Him : as in Jacob's case (Hosea, 12. 3, 4). UMBREIT and MAURER better translate as in ch. 4. 20, I only wish that He) " would *attend* to me," *i.e.*, give me a patient hearing as an ordinary judge, not using His omnipotence, but only His divine knowledge of my innocence. 7. **there** — Rather, Then : if God would " attend " to me (*v.* 6). **righteous** — *i.e.*, the result of my *dispute* would be, He would acknowledge me as *righteous*. **delivered** — *From* suspicion of guilt on the part of *my Judge*. 8. But I wish in vain. For " behold," etc. **forward . . . backward** — Rather, " to the *East* — to the *West*." The Hebrew geographers faced the East, *i.e.*, sun-rise : not the North, as we do. So " before " means East : " behind," West (So the Hindoos). " Para," *before* — East : " Apara," *behind* — West : " Daschina," *the right hand* — South :

"Bama," *left* — North. A similar reference to sunrise appears in the name Asia, *sunrise*: Europe, *sunset*; pure Baylonian names, as RAWLINSON shows. 9. Rather, "To the N." **work** — God's glorious *works* are especially seen towards the North region of the sky by one in the Northern hemisphere. The antithesis is between God *working* and **yet not being beheld**: as in ch. 9. 11, between "He *goeth by*," and "I see Him *not*." If the *Hebrew* bears it, the parallelism to the second clause is better suited by translating, as UMBREIT, *doth hide himself*; but then the antithesis to *behold* would be lost. **right hand** — "In the South." **hideth** — Appropriately, of the *unexplored* South, then regarded as uninhabitable through heat (see ch. 34. 29). 10. **But** — Correcting himself for the wish that his cause should be known before God. The omniscient One already *knoweth the way in me* (my *inward* principles :) His *outward* way or course of acts is mentioned in v. 11. So *in me*, (ch. 4. 21); though for some inscrutable cause He as yet hides himself (v. 8, 9). **when** — Let Him only but try my cause, I shall, etc. 11. **held** — Fast by *His steps*. The law is in Old Testament poetry regarded as *a way*, God going before us as our guide, in whose footsteps we must tread (Psalm 17. 5). **declined** — (Psalm 125. 5). 12. **esteemed** — Rather, *laid up*, viz., as a treasure found (Matthew, 13. 44; Psalm 119. 11); alluding to the words of Eliphaz (ch. 22. 22). There was no need to tell me so; I have done so already (Jeremiah, 15. 16). **necessary** — "Appointed portion" (of food: as in Proverbs, 30. 8). UMBREIT and MAURER translate "More than my *law*;" my own will, in antithesis to "the words of His mouth" (John, 6. 38). Probably under the general term, "what is *appointed* to me" (the same *Hebrew* is in v. 14), all that ministers to the appetites of the body and carnal will is included. 13. **in one mind** — Notwithstanding my innocence, He is *unaltered* in His purpose of proving me guilty (ch. 9. 12). **soul** — His *will* (Psalm 115. 3). God's sovereignty. He has *one* great purpose; nothing is hazardous; everything has its proper place with a view to His purpose. 14. **many such** — He has yet many more such ills in store for me, though hidden in His breast (ch. 10. 13). 15. God's decrees, impossible to be resisted, and leaving us in the dark as to what may come next, are calculated to fill the mind with holy awe. [BARNES.] 16. **soft** — Faint. Hath melted my courage. Here again Job's language is that of Jesus Christ (Psalm 22. 14). 17. Because I was not taken away by death from the evil to come (*lit., from before the face of the darkness*, Isaiah, 57. 1). Alluding to the words of Eliphaz (ch. 22. 11), "darkness," *i.e.*, calamity. "Cut off;" rather, in the Arabic sense, *Brought to the land of silence*; my sad complaint hushed in death. [UMBREIT.] "Darkness" in the second clause, not the same *Hebrew* word as in the first, *cloud, obscurity*. Instead of "covering the cloud (of evil) from my face," He "covers" me with it (ch. 22. 11).

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**Ver. 1-25.** 1. Why is it that, seeing that the times of punishment (Ezekiel, 30. 3; "time" in the same sense) are not hidden from the Almighty, they who know Him (His true worshippers, ch. 18. 21), do not

see His days (of vengeance; Joel, 1. 15; 2 Peter, 3. 10)? Or, with UMBREIT less simply, making the parallel clauses more nicely balanced, Why are not times of punishment hoarded up ("laid up"; ch. 21. 19; *appointed*) by the Almighty? *i.e.*, why are they not so appointed as that man may now *see* them; as the second clause shows. Job does not doubt that they *are* appointed: nay, he asserts it (ch. 21. 30); what he wishes is that God would let all *see* that it is so. 2-24. Instances of the wicked doing the worst deeds with seeming impunity. **Some** — The wicked. **landmarks** — Boundaries between different pastures (Deuteronomy, 19. 14; Proverbs, 22. 28). 3. **pledge** — Alluding to ch. 22. 6. Others really do, and with impunity, that which Eliphaz falsely charges the afflicted Job with. 4. *Literally*, they push the poor out of their road in meeting them. *Figuratively*, they take advantage of them by force and injustice (alluding to the charge of Eliphaz, ch. 22. 8; 1 Samuel, 8. 3). **poor** — In spirit and circumstances (Matthew, 5. 3). **hide** — From the injustice of their oppressor, who have robbed them of their all and driven them into unfrequented places (ch. 20. 19; 30. 3-6; Proverbs, 28. 28). 5. **wild asses** — (ch. 11. 12). So Ishmael is called *a wild-ass man*; *Hebrew*, Hebrew, (Genesis, 16. 12). These Bedouin robbers with the unbridled wildness of the ass of the desert, go forth thither. Robbery is their lawless "work." The desert, which yields no food to other men, yields food for the robber and his children by the plunder of caravans. **rising betimes** — In the East travelling is begun very early, before the heat comes on. 6. Like the wild asses (*v.* 5), they (these Bedouin robbers) reap (metaphorically) their various grain (so the *Hebrew* for "corn" means). The wild-ass does not let man pile up in a stable his *mixed provender* (Isaiah, 30. 24); so these robbers find their food in the open air, at one time in the desert (*v.* 5), at another, in the open fields. **the vintage of the wicked** — The vintage of robbery, not of honest industry. If we translate "belonging to the wicked," then it will imply, that the wicked alone have vineyards, the "pious poor" (*v.* 4), have none. "Gather" in *Hebrew*, is *gather late*: as the first clause refers to the *early* harvest of corn, so the second to the vintage *late* in autumn. 7. UMBREIT understands it of the Bedouin robbers who are quite regardless of the comforts of life. "They *pass the night* naked, etc., and uncovered, etc." But the allusion to ch. 22. 6, makes the *English Version* preferable (see Note below *v.* 10). Frost is not uncommon at night in those regions (Genesis, 31. 40). 8. **They** — The plundered travellers. **embrace the rock** — Take refuge under it (Lamentations, 4. 5). **from the breast** — Of the widowed mother. Kidnapping children for slaves. Here Job passes from wrongs in the desert, to those done among the habitations of men. **pledge** — *viz.*, the garment of the poor debtor, as next verse shows. 10. (Note ch. 22. 6). In *v.* 7, a like sin is alluded to: but *there* he implies open robbery of garments in the desert; *here*, the more refined robbery in civilized life, under the name of a "pledge." Having stripped the poor, they make them besides labour in their harvest-fields, and do not allow them to satisfy their hunger with any of the very corn which they carry to the heap. Worse treatment, than that of the ox, according to Deuteronomy, 25. 4. *Translate*, "they (the poor labourers) hungering carry the sheaves." [UMBREIT.] 11 **Which** — "They," the poor, "press the oil within their walls:" *viz.*, not only in the open fields



(*v.* 10), but also in the *wall-enclosed* vineyards and olive gardens of the oppressor (Isaiah, 5. 5). Yet they are not allowed to quench their "thirst" with the grapes and olives. Here, *thirsty*; *v.* 10, *hungry*. 12. **Man**—Rather, "mortals" (not the common *Hebrew* for "men,"); so the Masoretic vowel points read as *English Version*. But the vowel points are modern. The true reading is, *The dying*: answering to "the wounded" in the next clause, so *Syriac*. Not merely in the country (*v.* 11), but also in the city there are oppressed sufferers, who cry for help in vain. "From out of the city"; *i.e.*, they long to get forth and be free outside of it (Exodus, 1. 11; 2. 23). **wounded**—By the oppressor (Ezekiel, 30. 24). **layeth not folly**—Takes no account of (by punishing) their *sin* ("folly" in scripture; ch. 1. 22). This is the gist of the whole previous list of sins (Acts, 17. 30). UMBREIT with *Syriac* reads by changing a vowel point, "Regards not their *supplication*." 13. So far as to openly committed sins; now, those done in the dark. *Translate*, "There are those among them (the wicked) who rebel," etc. **light**—Both *lit.*, and *fig.*, (John, 3. 19, 20; Proverbs, 2. 13). **paths thereof**—Places where the light shines. 14. **with the light**—At early dawn, whilst still dark, when the traveller in the East usually sets out, and the poor labourer to his work; the murderous robber lies in wait then (Psalm 10. 8). **is as a thief**—*Thieves* in the East steal whilst men sleep at night, *robbers* murder at early dawn. The same men who steal at night, when light dawns not only rob, but murder to escape detection. 15. (Proverbs, 7. 9; Psalm 10. 11. **disguiseth**—Puts a veil on. 16. **dig through**—Houses in the East are generally built of sundried mud bricks (so Matthew, 6. 19). "Thieves break through," *lit.*, *dig through* (Ezekiel, 12. 7). **had marked**—Rather as in ch. 9. 7, "They shut themselves up (in their houses): *lit.*, they seal up. **for themselves**—For their own ends, *viz.*, to escape detection. **know not**—Shun. 17. They shrink from the "morning" light as much as other men do from the *blackest darkness*, ("the shadow of death.") **if one know**—*i.e.*, recognize them. Rather, "They know well (are familiar with) the terrors of," etc. [UMBREIT.] Or, as MAURER, "They know the terrors of (this) darkness," *viz.*, of morning, the light, which is as terrible to them, as darkness ("The shadow of death") is to other men. 18-21. In these verses Job quotes the opinion of his adversaries, ironically: he quoted them so before (ch. 21. 17-21). In *v.* 22-24, he states his own observations as the opposite. You say "*The sinner is swift, i.e.*, swiftly passes away (as a thing floating) *on the surface of the waters*" (Ecclesiastes, 11. 1; Hosea, 10. 7). **is cursed**—By those who witness their "swift" destruction. **beholdeth not**—"Turneth not to" *fig.*, for, He cannot enjoy his pleasant possessions (ch. 20. 17; 15. 33). **the way of the vineyards**—Including his *fields*, fertile as vineyards; opposite to "the way of the desert." 19. Arabian image; melted snow, as contrasted with the living fountain, quickly dries up the sun-burnt sand, not leaving a trace behind (ch. 6. 16-18). The *Hebrew* is terse and elliptical to express the swift and utter destruction of the godless: (so) "the grave—they have sinned!" 20. **The womb**—The very mother that bare him, and who is the last to "forget" the child that *sucked* her (Isaiah, 49. 15), shall dismiss him from her memory (ch. 18. 17; Proverbs, 10. 7). The worm shall *suck, i.e.*, "feed sweetly" on him as a delicate mor-

sel (ch. 21. 33). **wickedness**—*i.e.*, the wicked; abstract for concrete (as ch. 5. 16). **as a tree**—Utterly (ch. 19. 10); UMBREIT better, "As a staff." A broken staff is the emblem of irreparable ruin (Isaiah, 14. 5; Hosea, 4. 12). The reason given by the friends why the sinner deserves such a fate. **barren**—Without sons, who might have protected her. **widow**—Without a husband to support her. 22-25. Reply of Job to the opinion of the friends. Experience proves the contrary. *Translate*, "But He (God) prolongeth the life of (*lit. draweth out at length; Margin*, Psalm 36. 10), the mighty with His (God's) power. He (the wicked) riseth up (from his sick bed) although he had given up hope of (*lit.*, when he no longer believed in) life" (Deuteronomy, 28. 66). 23. *Lit.*, He (God omitted as often; ch. 3. 22; Ecclesiastes, 9. 9; reverentially) giveth to him (the wicked, to be) in safety, or security. **yet**—Job means, How strange that God should so favour them, and yet have his eyes all the time open to their wicked ways! (Proverbs, 15. 3; Psalm 73. 4). 24. Job repeats what he said (ch. 21. 13), that sinners die in exalted positions, not the painful and lingering death we might expect, but a *quick and easy death*. Join "for a while" with "are gone," not as *English Version*. *Translate*, "A moment—and they are no more! They are brought low, as all (others) gather up their feet to die" (so the *Hebrew* of "are taken out of the way"). A natural death (Genesis, 49. 33). **ears of corn**—In a ripe and full age, not prematurely (ch. 5. 26). 25. (so ch. 9. 24).

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THIRD SERIES.

**Ver. 1-6.** BILDAD'S REPLY. He tries to show Job's rashness (ch. 23. 3), by arguments borrowed from Eliphaz (ch. 15. 15), with which cf. ch. 11. 17. 2. Power and terror, *i.e.*, terror-inspiring power. **peace in his high places**—Implying that His power is such on high as to quell all opposition, not merely there, but on earth also. The Holy Ghost here shadowed forth Gospel truths (Colossians, 1. 20; Ephesians, 1. 10). 3. **armies**—Angels and stars (Isaiah, 40. 26; Jeremiah, 33. 22; Genesis, 15. 5; countless, Daniel, 7. 10). **His light**—(James, 1. 17). 4. (ch. 4. 17, 18; 14. 4; 15. 14), 5. "Look up even unto the moon" (ch. 15. 15). "Stars" here answer to "saints" (angels) there; "the moon" here, to "the heavens" there. Even the "stars," the most dazzling object to man's eye, and the angels, of which the stars are emblems (ch. 4. 18; Revelation, 9. 1) are imperfect in His sight. Theirs is the light and purity of but creatures; His, of the Creator. 6. (ch. 4. 19-21; 15. 16). **worm... worm**—Two distinct *Hebrew* words. The first, a worm bred in putridity; alluding to man's *corruption*. The second, a crawling worm; implying that man is *weak and grovelling*.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THIRD SERIES.

**JOB'S REPLY.** 2, 3. **without power... no strength... no wisdom**—The negatives are used instead of the positives, *powerlessness*, etc.,

designedly (so Isaiah, 31. 8; Deuteronomy, 32. 21). Granting I am, as you say (ch. 18. 7; 15. 2), *powerlessness* itself, etc. *How hast thou helped* such a one? **savest**—supportest. **plentifully**...**the thing as it is**—Rather, “abundantly—wisdom.” Bildad had made great pretensions to *abundant wisdom*. How has he shown it? 4. For whose instruction were thy words meant? If for me, I know the subject (God's omnipotence) better than my instructor: (*v.* 5-14) is a sample of Job's knowledge of it. **whose spirit**—not that of God (ch. 32. 8); nay rather, the borrowed sentiment of Eliphaz (ch. 4. 17, 19; 15. 14-16). 5-14. As before in chap. 9. and 12., Job had shown himself not inferior to the friends' inability to describe God's greatness, so now he describes it as manifested in Hell (the world of the dead) 5, 6; on earth, 7; in the sky, 8-11; the sea, 12; the heavens, 13. **Dead things are formed**—Rather, “The souls of the dead (Rephaim) tremble.” Not only does God's power exist, as Bildad says (ch. 25. 2), “in high places” (heaven), but reaches to the region of the dead. *Rephaim* here, and Proverbs, 21. 16; Isaiah, 14. 9, is from a *Hebrew* root, meaning *to be weak*, hence *deceased*; in Genesis, 14. 5, it is applied to the Canaanite *giants*; perhaps in derision, to express their *weakness*, in spite of their gigantic size, as compared with Jehovah [UMBREIT]; or as the imagination of the living magnifies apparitions, the term originally was applied to *ghosts*, and and then to *giants* in general. [MAGEE.] **from under**—UMBREIT joins this with the previous word, tremble *from beneath* (so Isaiah, 14. 9). But the Masoretic text joins it “under the waters.” Thus the place of the dead will be represented as *under the waters* (Psalm 18. 4, 5): and the waters as under the earth (Psalm 24. 2), MAGEE well *translates* thus, “The souls of the dead tremble; (the places) under the waters, and their inhabitants.” Thus the Masoretic connection is retained; and at the same time the parallel clauses are evenly balanced. “The inhabitants of the places under the waters” are those in Gehenna, the lower of the two parts into which Sheol, according to the Jews, is divided: they answer to “destruction,” *i.e.*, the place of the wicked in *v.* 6, as “Rephaim” (*v.* 5), to “Hell” (Sheol), (*v.* 6). Sheol comes from a *Hebrew* root—*ask*, because it is insatiable (Proverbs, 27. 20); or *ask as a loan to be returned*, implying Sheol is but a *temporary abode*, previous to the resurrection; so for *English Version* “formed:” LXX. and Chaldee *translate*, *shall be born, or born again*, implying the dead are to be *given back* from Sheol and *born again into a new state*. [MAGEE.] 6. —ch. 38. 17; Ps. 139. 8; Proverbs, 5. 11). **destruction**—*The abode of destruction, i.e.*, of lost souls. *Hebrew*, Abaddon (Revelation, 9. 11). **no covering**—from God's eyes. 7. Hint of the true theory of the earth. Its suspension in empty space is stated in the 2nd clause. The North in particular is specified in the 1st, being believed to be the *highest part of the earth*, (Isaiah, 14. 13). The Northern hemisphere or vault of *heaven* is included; often compared to a stretched out canopy (Psalm 104. 2). The chambers of the South are mentioned (ch. 9. 9), *i.e.*, the Southern hemisphere, consistently with the earth's globular form. 8. **in**...**clouds**—as if in airy vessels, which though light do not burst with the weight of water in them (Proverbs, 30. 4). 9. Rather, *He encompasses or closeth*. God makes the clouds a veil to screen the glory not only of His person, but even of *the exterior of His throne* from profane

eyes. His agency is everywhere, yet Himself invisible (Psalm 18. 11; 104. 3). 10. Rather, "He hath drawn a circular bound round the waters" (Proverbs, 8. 27; Psalm 104. 9). The horizon seems a circle. Indication is given of the globular form of the earth. **until the day, etc.** — To the confines of light and darkness. When the light falls on our horizon, the other hemisphere is dark. UMBREIT and MAURER *translate*, "He has *most perfectly (lit., to perfection)* drawn the bound (taken from the 1st clause) between light and darkness" (cf. Genesis, 1. 4, 6, 9): where the bounding of the light from darkness is similarly brought into proximity with the bounding of the waters. 11. **pillars** — poetically for the mountains which seem to bear up the sky (Psalm 104. 32). **astonished** — *viz.*, from terror. Personification. **His reproof** — (Psalm 104. 7). The thunder, reverberating from cliff to cliff (Habakkuk, 3. 10; Nahum, 1. 5). 12. **divideth** — (Psalm 74. 13). Perhaps at creation (Genesis, 1. 9, 10). The parallel clause favors UMBREIT, "He stilleth." But the *Hebrew* means *He moves*. Probably such a "moving" is meant as that at the *assuaging* of the flood by the wind which "God made to pass over" it (Genesis, 8. 1; Psalm 104. 7). **the proud** — Rather, *its pride, viz.*, of the sea (ch. 9. 13). 13. UMBREIT less simply, "By His breath He maketh the heavens to revive:" *viz.*, His wind dissipates the clouds, which obscured the shining stars. And so the next clause in contrast, "His hand doth strangle," *i.e.*, obscures the North constellation, the dragon. Pagan astronomy typified the flood trying to destroy the ark by the dragon constellation, about to devour the moon in its eclipsed crescent-shape like a boat (ch. 3. 8, *Margin*). But better as *English Version* (Psalm 33. 6). **crooked** — Implying the *oblique* course of the stars, or the ecliptic. "Fleeing" or "swift" [UMBREIT] (Isaiah, 27. 1). This particular constellation is made to represent the splendour of all the stars. 14. **parts** — Rather, "only the extreme boundaries of, etc., and how faint is the *whisper* that we hear of Him!" **thunder** — The entire fullness. In antithesis to "whisper" (1 Corinthians, 13. 9, 10, 12.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

**Ver. 1-23.** It was now Zophar's turn to speak. But as he and the other two were silent, virtually admitting defeat, after a pause Job proceeds. 1. **parable** — Applied in the East to a figurative sententious embodiment of wisdom in poetic form, a gnome (Psalm 49. 4). **continued** — proceeded to put forth: implying *elevation* of discourse. 2. (1 Samuel, 20. 3). **taken away... judgment** — Words unconsciously foreshadowing Jesus Christ (Isaiah, 53. 8; Acts, 8. 33). God will not give Job his right, by declaring his innocence. **vexed** — *Hebrew, made bitter* (Ruth, 1. 20). 3. Implying Job's knowledge of the fact that the living soul was breathed into man by God (Genesis, 2. 7). "All the while." But MAURER, "*as yet all my breath is in me*" (notwithstanding my trials): the reason why I can speak so boldly. 4. (ch. 6. 28, 30). The "deceit" would be, if he were to admit guilt, against the witness of his conscience. 5. **justify you** — Approve of your views. **mine integrity** — which you deny, on account of my misfortunes. 6. Rather,

"my heart" (conscience) reproaches "not one of my days," *i.e.*, I do not repent of any of my days since I came into existence. [MAURER.]

**7. let...be**—Let mine enemy be accounted as wicked, *i.e.*, He who opposes my asseveration of innocence must be regarded as actuated by criminal hostility. Not a curse on his enemies. 8. "What hope hath the hypocrite, notwithstanding all his gains, when?" etc. "Gained" is antithetic to "taketh away." UMBREIT'S translation is an unmeaning tautology. "When God *cuts off*, when He *taketh away* his life." **taketh away**—*Lit.*, draws out the soul from the body, which is, as it were, its scabbard (ch. 4. 21; Psalm 104. 29; Daniel, 7. 15). Job says, he admits what Bildad said (ch. 8. 13) and Zophar (ch. 20. 5). But he says, the very fact of his still calling upon God (*v.* 10) amidst all his trials which a hypocrite would not dare to do, shows he is no "hypocrite." 9. (Psalm 66. 18). 10. Alluding to ch. 22. 26. **always call**—He may do so in times of prosperity, in order to be thought religious. But he will not, as I do, call on God in calamities verging on death. Therefore I cannot be a "hypocrite" (ch. 19. 25; 20. 5; Psalm 62. 8). 11-23. These words are contrary to Job's previous sentiments (Notes, ch. 21. 22-23; 24. 22-25). They therefore seem to be Job's statement, not so much of his own sentiments, as of what Zophar would have said, had he spoken when his turn came (end of ch. 26). So Job stated the friends' opinion (ch. 2. 17-21; 24. 18-21). The objection is, why, if so, does not Job answer Zophar's opinion, as stated by himself? The fact is, it is probable that Job tacitly, by giving, in ch. 28, only a general answer, implies, that in spite of the wicked *often* dying, as he said, in prosperity, he does not mean to deny that the wicked are *in the main* dealt with according to right, and that God herein vindicates His moral government *even here*. Job therefore states Zophar's argument more strongly than Zophar would have done. But by comparing *v.* 13 with ch. 20. 29 ("portion," "heritage"), it will be seen, it is Zophar's argument, rather than his own, that Job states. Granting it to be true, implies Job, you ought not to use it as an argument to criminate *me*. For (ch. 28) the ways of Divine wisdom in afflicting the godly are inscrutable: all that is sure to man is, the fear of the Lord is wisdom (*v.* 28).

**by the hand**—Rather, *concerning* the hand of God, *viz.*, what God does in governing men. **with the Almighty**—The counsel or principle which regulates God's dealings. 12. "Ye yourselves see," that the wicked *often* are afflicted (though often the reverse, ch. 21. 33). But why do you "vainly" make this an argument to prove from my afflictions that I am wicked? 13. [Note, *v.* 11]. 14. His family only increases to perish by sword, or famine (Jeremiah, 18. 21; ch. 5. 20), the converse. 15. Those that escape war and famine (*v.* 14) shall be buried *by the deadly plague*—"death" (ch. 18. 13; Jeremiah, 15. 2; Revelation, 6. 8). The plague of the middle ages was called "the black death." Buried by it implies that they would have none else, but the death plague itself (poetically personified), to perform their funeral rites, *i.e.*, would have none. **his**—Rather, *their* widows. Transitions from *Singular* to *Plural* are frequent. Polygamy is not implied. 16. **dust . . . clay**—Images of multitudes (Zechariah, 9. 3). Many changes of aimant are a chief constituent of wealth in the East. 17. *Inverted parallelism*. My introduction. Of the four clauses in the two verses,

1 answers to 4, 2 to 3 (so Matthew, 7. 6). 18. (ch. 8. 14; 4. 19). The transition is natural from "raiment" (*v.* 16) to the "house" of the "moth" in it, and of it, when in its larva state. The *moth worm's house* is broken whenever the "raiment" is shaken out, so frail is it. **booth**—A bough-formed hut which the guard of a vineyard raises for temporary shelter (Isaiah, 1. 8). 19. **gathered**—Buried honorably (Genesis, 25. 8; 2 Kings, 22. 20). But UMBREIT, agreeably to *v.* 18, which describes *the short continuance of the sinner's prosperity*, "He layeth himself rich in his bed, and nothing is robbed from him, he openeth his eyes, and nothing more is there." If *English Version* be retained, the first clause probably means, rich though he be in *dying*, he shall not be honoured with a *funeral*; the second, When he opens his eyes in *the unseen world*, it is only to see *his destruction*. LXX. read for "not gathered," *He does not proceed, i.e., goes to his bed no more*. So MAURER. 20. (ch. 18. 11; 22. 11, 21). Like a sudden violent flood (Isaiah, 8. 7, 8; Jeremiah, 47. 2): conversely (Psalm 32. 6). 21. (ch. 21. 18; 15. 2; Psalm 58. 9). **cast**—viz., thunderbolts (ch. 6. 4; 7. 20; 16. 13; Psalm 7. 12, 13). 23. **clap hands**—for joy at his downfall (Lamentations, 2. 15; Nahun, 3. 19). **hiss**—deride (Jeremiah, 25. 9). Job alludes to Bildad's words (ch. 18. 18).

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**Ver. 1-28.** JOB'S SPEECH CONTINUED. In ch. 27. Job had tacitly admitted, that the statement of the friends was often true, that God vindicated His justice by punishing the wicked here; but still the affliction of the godly remained unexplained. Man has, by skill, brought the precious metals from their concealment. But the Divine Wisdom, which governs human affairs, he cannot similarly discover, 12, etc. However, the image from the same metals (ch. 23. 10), implies Job has made some way towards solving the riddle of his life, viz., that affliction is to him as the refining fire to gold. **vein**—A mine from which it *goes forth*. *Hebrew, i.e., is dug*. **place for gold**—A place where gold may be found, *which men refine*. Not as *English Version*, "A place—where," etc. (Malachi, 3. 3). Contrasted with gold found in the bed and sand of rivers, which does not need refining; as the *gold dug from a mine* does. Golden ornaments have been found in Egypt, of the time of Joseph. 2. **brass**—*i.e., copper*: for brass is a mixed metal of copper and zinc, of modern invention. Iron is less easily discovered, and wrought than copper: therefore copper was in common use long before iron. Copper-stone is called "cadmium" by Pliny [NATURAL HISTORY, 34. 1. 36. 21]. Iron is fitly said to be taken out of the "earth" (dust), for ore looks like mere *earth*. 3. "Man makes an end of darkness" by exploring the darkest depths (with torches). **all perfection**—Rather, carried out his search to the utmost perfection; most thoroughly searches the stones of the darkness and of the shadow of death (thickest gloom), *i.e.* the stones, whatever they be, embedded in the darkest bowels of the earth [UMBREIT] (ch. 26. 10). 4. Three hardships in mining: 1. "A stream (flood) breaks out at the side of the stranger;" viz., *the miner,*

strange new-comer into places heretofore unexplored; his surprise at the sudden stream breaking out beside him is expressed (*English Version*, from the inhabitant); 2. "Forgotten (unsupported) by the foot they hang," viz., by ropes, in descending. In the *Hebrew*, "Lo there" precedes this clause, graphically placing it as if before the eyes. The waters are inserted by *English Version*. Are dried up, ought to be "hang," are suspended." *English Version* perhaps understood, waters of whose existence man was previously unconscious, and near which he never trod: and yet man's energy is such, that by pumps, etc., he soon causes them to "dry up and go away." [So HERDER.] 3. "Far away from men, they move with uncertain step:" they stagger: not "they are one." [UMBREIT.] 5. Its fertile surface yields food: and yet "beneath it is turned up as it were with fire." So PLINY, NATURAL HISTORY, 33, observes on the ingratitude of man who repays the debt he owes the earth for food, by digging out its bowels. "Fire" was used in mining. [UMBREIT.] *English Version* is simpler, which means precious stones which glow like fire, and so v. 6 follows naturally (Ezekiel 8. 14). 6. Sapphires are found in alluvial soil near rocks, and imbedded in gneiss. The ancients distinguished two kinds: 1. The real, of transparent blue. 2. That improperly so called, opaque, with gold spots, i.e., lapislazuli. To the latter, looking like gold dust, UMBREIT refers "dust of gold." *English Version* better, "The stones of the earth are, etc., and the clods of it (*Vulgate*) are gold:" the parallel clauses are thus neater. 7. fowl—Rather, ravenous bird, or eagle, which is the most sharp-sighted of birds (Isaiah, 46. 11). A vulture will spy a carcass at an amazing distance. The miner penetrates the earth by a way unseen by birds of the keenest sight. 8. lion's whelps—*it*, the sons of pride, i.e., the fiercest beasts. passed—The *Hebrew* implies the proud gait of the lion. The miner ventures, where not even the fierce lion dares to go in pursuit of his prey. 9. rock—Flint. He puts forth his hand to cleave the hardest rock. by the roots—From their foundations, by undermining them. 10. He cuts channels to drain off the waters, which hinder his mining; and when the waters are gone, he is able to see the precious things in the earth. 11. floods—He retains the streams from weeping," a poetical expression for the trickling subterranean rills, which impede him: answering to the first clause of v. 10; so also the two latter clauses in each verse correspond. 12. Can man discover the Divine Wisdom by which the world is governed, as he can the treasures hidden in the earth? Certainly not. Divine Wisdom conceived as a person (v. 12-27, distinct from God (v. 23; also in Proverbs, 8. 23, 27). The Almighty Word, Jesus Christ, we know now, is that Wisdom. The order of the world was originated and maintained by the breaking forth (Spirit) of Wisdom, unfathomable and unpurchaseable by man. In verse 28, the only aspect of it, which relates to, and may be understood by, man, is stated. understanding—Insight into the plan of the Divine government. 13. Man can fix no price upon it, for it is nowhere to be found in man's abode (Isaiah, 38. 11). Job implies both its invaluable worth, and the impossibility of buying it at any price. 15. Not the usual word for "gold;" from a *Hebrew* root, to cut up with care, i.e., purest gold (1 Kings, 6. 20, Margin). weighed—The precious metals were weighed out before coining was known

(Genesis, 23. 16). 16. **gold of Ophir**—The most precious (Note, 22, 24; Psalm 45. 9). **onyx**—(Genesis, 2. 12). More valued formerly than now. The term is Greek, meaning *thumb nail*, from some resemblance in colour. The Arabic denotes, of two colours, white preponderating. 17. **crystal**—Or else *glass*, if then known, very costly. From a root, *to be transparent*. **jewels**—Rather, *vessels*. 18. Red coral (Ezekiel, 27. 16). 18. **pearls**—*Lit., what is frozen*. Probably *crystal*; and *v. 17* will then be *glass*. **rubies**—UMBREIT translates pearls (see Lamentations, 4. 1; Proverbs, 3. 15). The Urim and Thummim, the means of consulting God by the twelve stones on the high priests' breastplate, "the stones of the sanctuary" (Lamentations, 4. 1), have their counterpart in this chapter; the precious stones symbolizing the "light" and "perfection" of Divine wisdom. 19. **Ethiopia**—*Cush* in the Hebrew. Either Ethiopia, or the South of Arabia, near the Tigris. 20. Verse 12 repeated with great force. 21. None can tell *whence* or *where* seeing it, etc. **fowls**—The gift of divination was assigned by the heathen especially to birds. Their rapid flight heavenwards and keen sight originated the superstition. Job may allude to it, Not even the boasted divination of birds had an insight into it (Ecclesiastes, 10. 20). But it may merely mean, as *v. 7*. It escapes the eye of the most keen-sighted bird. 22. *i.e.* the abodes of *destruction* and of the *dead*. "Death" put for Sheol (ch. 30. 23; 20. 6; Psalm 8. 13). **we have (only) heard**—The *report* of her. We have not *seen* her. In the land of the living (*v. 13*), the workings of Wisdom are *seen*, though not herself. In the regions of the dead, she is only *heard* of, her actions on nature not being seen (Ecclesiastes, 9. 10). 23. God hath, and is Himself wisdom. 24. "Seeth (all that is) under," etc. 25. God has adjusted the weight of the winds so seemingly imponderable, lest, if too weighty, or too light, injury should be caused. He measureth out the waters, fixing their bounds, with wisdom as his counsellor (Proverbs, 8. 27-31; Isaiah, 40. 12). 26. The decree regulating at what time and place, and in what quantity the rain should fall. **away**—Through the parted clouds (ch. 38. 25; Zechariah, 10. 1). 27. **declare**—Manifest her, *viz.*, in His works (Psalm 19. 1, 2). So the approval bestowed by the Creator on His works (Genesis, 1. 10, 31); cf. the "rejoicing" of wisdom at the same (Proverbs, 8. 30; which UMBREIT translates "I was the skillful artificer by his side" 31). **prepared**—Not, *created*, for wisdom is from everlasting (Proverbs, 8.); but "established" Her as Governor of the world. **searched out**—Examined her works to see, whether she was adequate to the task of governing the world. [MAURER.] 28. Rather, *But* unto man, etc., *My* wisdom is that whereby all things are governed: *Thy* wisdom is in *fearing God and shunning evil*, and in feeling assured that my wisdom always acts aright, though thou dost not understand the principle which regulates it: *ex. gr.*, in afflicting the godly (John, 7. 17). The friends, therefore, as not comprehending the Divine Wisdom, should not infer Job's guilt from his sufferings. Here alone in Job the name of God, "Adonai" occurs, *Lord* or *master*, often applied to Messiah in Old Testament. Appropriately here, in speaking of the Word or Wisdom, **by** whom the world was made (Proverbs, 8.; John, 1.; Ecclesiastes, 24.)



## CHAPTER XXIX.

**Ver. 1-25.** 1. Job pauses for a reply. None being made, he proceeds to illustrate the mysteriousness of God's dealings, as set forth (ch. 28) by his own case. 2. **preserved me**—From calamity. 3. **candle**—When His favour shone on me (Note, 18. 6; Psalm 18. 28). **darkness**—By His safeguard I passed secure through *dangers*. Perhaps alluding to the lights carried before caravans in nightly travels through deserts. [NOYES.] 4. **youth**—*Lit., autumn*; the time of the ripe fruits of my prosperity. Applied to *youth*, as the Orientalists began their year with autumn, the most temperate season in the East. **secret**—When the intimate friendship of God rested on my tent (Proverbs, 3. 32; Psalm 31. 20; Genesis, 18. 17; John, 15. 15). The *Hebrew* often means a *divan for deliberation*. 6. **butter**—Rather, *cream, lit., thick milk*. Wherever I turned my steps the richest milk and oil flowed in to me abundantly. Image from pastoral life. Literal *washing of the feet in milk* is not meant, as the second clause shows; *Margin, with me, i.e., near my path, wherever I walked* (Deuteronomy, 32. 13). Olives amidst *rocks*, yield the best oil. Oil in the East is used for food, light, anointing, and medicine. 7-10. The great influence Job had over young and old and noblemen. **through...street**—Rather, When I went out of my house, in the country (see ch. 1., prologue) to the gate (ascending) *up to the city* (which was on elevated ground), and when I prepared my (judicial) seat in *the market-place*. The market-place was the place of judgment, at the gate or propylæa of the city, such as is found in the remains of Nineveh and Persepolis (Isaiah, 59. 14; Psalm 55. 11; 127. 5). 8. **hid**—Not *lit.* Rather, *stepped backwards, reverentially. The aged, who were already seated, arose and remained standing (Hebrew), until Job seated himself. Oriental manners.* 9. (ch. 4. 2; Note, 21. 5). "Refrained," stopped in the middle of their speech. 10. *Margin, voice*—*hid, i.e., hushed* (Ezekiel, 3. 26). "Tongue cleaved," etc., *i.e., awed by my presence the emirs or shiekhs were silent.* 11. **blessed**—Ex-tolled my virtues (Proverbs, 31. 28). Omit *me* after "heard;" whoever *heard of me* in general, not in the market-place (7-10), praised me. **gave witness**—to my honourable character. Image from a court of justice (Luke, 4. 22). "The eye," *i.e., face to face.*; antithesis to "ear," *i.e., report of me.* 12-17. The grounds on which Job was praised (*v. 11*), his helping the afflicted (Psalm 72. 12), who cried to him for help, as a judge, or as one possessed of means of charity. *Translate,* The fatherless who had none to help him. 13. So far was I from sending "widows" away empty (ch. 22. 9). **ready to perish**—(Proverbs, 31. 6). 14. (Isaiah, 61. 10; 1 Chronicles, 12. 18), *Margin. judgment*—Justice. **diadem**—Tiara. Rather, *turban, head-dress*. It and the full flowing outer mantle or "robe," are the prominent characteristics of an Oriental's grandee or high-priest's dress (Zechariah, 3. 5). So Job's righteousness especially characterized him. 15. *Lit., the blind* (Deuteronomy, 27. 18); *lame* (2 Samuel, 9. 13); *fig.*, also the spiritual support which the more enlightened gives to those less so (ch. 4. 3; Hebrews, 12. 13; Numbers, 10. 31). 16. So far was I from "breaking the arms of the fatherless," as Eliphaz asserts (ch. 22. 9), I was a "father" to such,

the cause which I knew not — Rather, of him whom I knew not, the stranger (Proverbs, 29. 7, [UMBREIT.]; contrast Luke, 18. 1, etc.). Applicable to *almsgiving* (Psalm 41. 1); but here primarily, *judicial conscientiousness* (ch. 31. 13). 17. Image from combating with wild beasts (ch. 4. 11; Psalm 3. 7). So compassionate was Job to the oppressed, so terrible to the oppressor! **jaws** — Job broke *his power*, so that he could do no more hurt, and tore from him the spoil, which he had torn from others. 18. **I said** — In my heart (Psalm 30. 6). **in** — Rather, “*With my nest:*” as the second clause refers to long life. Instead of my family dying before me, as now, I shall live so long as to die with them; proverbial for long life. Job did realize his hope (ch. 42. 16). However, *In the bosom of my family, gives a good sense* (Numbers, 24. 21; Obadiah, 4.). Use “*nest*” for a *secure dwelling*. **sand** — (Genesis, 22. 17; Habakkuk, 1. 9). But LXX., and *Vulgate*, and Jewish interpreters, favour the *translation*, “the phoenix-bird,” “*Nest*” in the parallel clause supports the reference to a *bird*. “*Sand*” for *multitude*, applies to men, rather than to *years*. The myth was, that the Phoenix sprang from a nest of myrrh, made by his father before death, and that he then came from Arabia (*Job's country*) to Heliopolis (the city of the sun) in Egypt, once in every 500 years, and there burnt his father. [HERODOTUS, 2. 73.] Modern research has shown that this was the Egyptian mode of representing hieroglyphically a particular chronological era or cycle. The death and revival every 500 years, and the reference to the *sun* implies such a grand cycle commencing afresh from the same point in relation to the sun, from which the previous one started. Job probably refers to this. 19. *Lit., opened to the waters*. Opposed to ch. 18. 16. Vigorous health. 20. My renown, like my bodily health, was continually fresh. **bow** — Metaphor from war, for, *My strength*, which gains me “*renown*,” was ever renewed (Jeremiah, 49. 35). 21. Job reverts with peculiar pleasure to his former dignity in assemblies (*v.* 7-10). 22. **not again** — Did not contradict me. **dropped** — Affected their minds, as the genial rain does the soil on which it gently drops (Amos, 7. 16; Deuteronomy, 32. 2; Song, 4. 11). 23. Image of *v.* 22 continued. They waited for my salutary counsel, as the dry soil does for the refreshing rain. **opened...mouth** — *Panted for*; Oriental image (Psalm 119. 131). The “*early rain*” is in autumn and onwards, while the seed is being sown. The “*latter rain*” is in March, and brings forward the harvest, which ripens in May or June. Between the early and latter rains, *some* rain falls, but not in such quantities as those rains. Between March and October no rain falls (Deuteronomy, 11. 14; James, 5. 7). 24. When I relaxed my wonted gravity (a virtue much esteemed in the East) and smiled, they could hardly credit it, and yet, notwithstanding my condescension *they did not cast aside* reverence for *my gravity*. But the parallelism is better in UMBREIT's translation, “*I smiled kindly on those who trusted not,*” *i.e.*, in times of danger I cheered those in despondency. “*And they could not cast down (by their despondency) my serenity of countenance,*” (flowing from trust in God) (Proverbs, 16. 15; Psalm 104. 15). The opposite phrase (Genesis, 4. 5, 6). “*Gravity*” cannot well be meant by “*light of countenance.*” 25. **I chose...their way** — *i.e.*, I willingly went up to **their assembly** (from my country residence, *v.* 7). **in...army** — As a

king supreme in the midst of his army. **comforteth...mourners**— Here again Job unconsciously foreshadows Jesus Christ (Isaiah, 61. 2, 3). Job's afflictions, as those of Jesus Christ, were fitting him for the office hereafter (Isaiah, 50. 4; Hebrews, 2. 18).

## CHAPTER XXX.

**Ver. 1-31. 1. younger**— Not the three friends (ch. 15. 10; 32. 4, 6, 7). A general description; 1-8, the lowness of the persons who derided him; 9-15, the derision itself. Formerly old men rose to me (ch. 29. 8). Now not only my *juniors*, who are bound to reverence me (Leviticus, 19, 32), but even the mean and *base-born* actually *deride* me: opposed to, "smiled upon" (ch. 19. 24). This goes farther than even the "mockery" of Job by *relations* and *friends* (ch. 12. 4; 16. 10, 20; 17. 2, 6; 19. 22). Orientals feel keenly any indignity shown by the young. Job speaks as a rich Arabian emir, proud of his descent. **dogs**— Regarded with disgust in the East as unclean (1 Samuel, 17. 43; Proverbs, 26. 11). They are not allowed to enter a house, but run about wild in the open air, living on offal and chance morsels (Psalm 59. 14, 15). Here again we are reminded of Jesus Christ (Psalm 22. 16). Their fathers, my co-evals, were so mean and famished that I would not have associated them *with* (not to say, set them *over*) my dogs in guarding my flock. 2. If their fathers could be of no *profit* to me, much less the sons, who are feebler than their sires: and *in whose case the hope of attaining old age is utterly gone*, so puny are they (ch. 5. 26). [MAURER.] Even if they had "strength of hands," that could be now of *no use to me*, as all I want in my present affliction is sympathy. 3. **solitary**— *Lit.*, *hard* as a rock; so *translate*, rather, *dried up*, emaciated with hunger. Job describes the rudest race of Bedouins of the desert. [UMBREIT.] **fleeing**— So LXX. Better, as *Syriac*, *Arabic* and *Vulgate*, *gnawers* of the wilderness." What they gnaw, follows in *v.* 4. **in former time**— *Lit.*, the "*yesternight* of desolation and waste" (the most utter desolation: Ezekiel, 6. 14); *i.e.*, those deserts *frightful as night* to man and even there *from time immemorial*. I think *both* ideas are in the word *darkness* [GESENIUS,] and *antiquity* [UMBREIT.] (Isaiah, 30. 33, *Margin*). 4. **mallows**— Rather, *salt-wort*, which grows in deserts and is eaten as a salad by the poor. [MAURER.] **by the bushes**— Among the bushes. **juniper**— Rather, a kind of broom, *spartium junceum* [LINNÆUS], still called in Arabia, as in the *Hebrew* of Job, *Retem*, of which the bitter roots are eaten by the poor. 5. **they cried**— *i.e.*, a cry is raised, etc. Expressing the contempt felt for his race by civilized and well-born Arabs. When these wild vagabonds make an incursion on villages, they are driven away, as thieves would be. 6. They are forced "to dwell." **cliffs of valleys**— Rather, "in the gloomy (*lit.*, gloom of) valleys," or *wadys*. To dwell in valleys, is, in the East, a mark of wretchedness. The Troglodytes, in parts of Arabia, lived in such dwellings as caves, etc. 7. **brayed**— Like the wild ass (ch. 6. 5), for food. The inarticulate tones of this uncivilized rabble are but little above those of the beast of the field. **gathered together**— Rather, sprinkled here and there. *Lit.*,

*poured out*, graphically picturing their disorderly mode of encampment lying up and down behind the thorn-bushes. **nettles** — Or *brambles*. [UMBREIT.] 8. **fools** — *i.e.*, the impious and abandoned (1 Samuel, 25. 25). **base** — Nameless, low-born rabble. **viler than**, etc. — Rather, they were *driven* or *beaten out of the land*. The Horites in Mount Seir (Genesis, 14. 6, with which cf. Genesis, 36. 20, 21; Deuteronomy, 2. 12, 22), were probably the aborigines, driven out by the tribe to which Job's ancestors belonged; their name means Troglodytæ, or *dwellers in caves*. To these Job alludes here, *v.* 1-8, and Genesis, 24. 4-6, which cf. together. 9. (ch. 17. 6). Strikingly similar to the derision Jesus Christ underwent (Lamentations, 3. 14; Psalm 69. 12). Here Job returning to the sentiment in *v.* 1. It is to such I am become a song of "derision." 10. **in my face** — Rather, refrain not to spit (in deliberate contempt) *before* my face. To spit at all in presence of another is thought in the East insulting, much more when done to mark "abhorrence." Cf. the further insult to Jesus Christ (Isaiah, 50. 6; Matthew, 26. 67). 11. *He*, *i.e.*, God; antithetical to *they*, *English Version*, here follows the marginal reading (KERI) "*My cord*;" image from a bow unstrung; opposed to ch. 29. 20. The text (CHETIB) "*His cord*," or "reins," is better: "yea, each lets loose his reins." [UMBREIT.] 12. **youth** — Rather, a (low) *brood*. To rise on the right hand is to *accuse*, as that was the position of the accuser in court (Zechariah, 3. 1; Psalm 109. 6). **push . . . feet** — Jostle me out of the way (ch. 24. 4). **ways of** — *i.e.*, their ways of (*i.e.*, with a view to my) destruction. Image, as in ch. 19. 12, from a besieging army throwing up a way of approach for itself to a city, 13. Image of an assailed fortress continued. They tear up the path, by which succor might reach me. **set forward** — (Zechariah, 1. 15). **they have no helper** — Arabic proverb for *contemptible* persons. Yet even such afflict Job. 14. **waters** — (So 2 Samuel, 5. 20). But it is better to retain the image of *v.* 12, 13. "They came (upon me) as through a wide *breach*," viz., made by the besiegers in the wall of a fortress (Isaiah, 30. 13). [MAURER.] **in the desolation** — "Amidst the crash" of falling masonry: or "with a shout like the crash" of, etc. 15. **they** — Terrors. **soul** — Rather, my dignity. [UMBREIT.] **welfare** — Prosperity. **cloud** — (ch. 7. 9; Isaiah, 44. 22). 16-23. Job's outward calamities affect his mind. **poured out** — In irrepressible complaints (Psalm 42. 4; Joshua, 7. 5). 17. In the *Hebrew*, night is poetically personified, as ch. 3. 3; "night pierceth my bones, (so that they fall) *from* me" (not as *English Version*, "*in* me,") see *v.* 30. **sinews** — So the Arabic, *veins*, akin to the *Hebrew*; rather, *gnawers*, as in *v.* 3 (Note), viz., *my gnawing pains* never cease. Effects of elephantiasis. 18. **of my disease** — Rather, "of God" (ch. 23. 6). **garment changed** — From a robe of honour to one of mourning, literally (ch. 2. 8; John, 3. 6) and metaphorically. [UMBREIT.] Or rather, as SCHUTTENS, following up *v.* 17, My *outer* garment is changed into affliction; *i.e.*, affliction has become my outer garment, it also bindeth me fast round (my throat) as the collar of the *inner* coat; *i.e.*, it is both my inner and outer garment. Observe the distinction between the inner and outer garment. The latter refers to his afflictions *from without*, (*v.* 1-13); the former his personal affliction (*v.* 14-23). UMBREIT makes "God" subject to "bindeth," as in *v.* 19. 19. God is poetically said to do that

which the mourner had done to himself (ch. 2. 8). With lying in the ashes he had become like them in dirty colour. 20. **stand up** — The reverential attitude of a suppliant before a king (1 Kings, 8. 14; Luke, 18. 11-13). **not** — Supplied from the first clause. But the intervening affirmative "stand" makes this ellipsis unlikely. Rather, as ch. 16. 9 (not only dost thou refuse aid to me "standing" as a suppliant, but) *thou dost regard me with a frown*: eye me sternly. 22. **lifestest... to wind** — As a "leaf," or "stubble" (ch. 13. 25). The moving pillars of sand, raised by the wind to the clouds, as described by travellers, would happily depict Job's agitated spirit, if it be to them that he alludes. **dissolveth... substance** — The *marginal Hebrew* reading (KERI): "my wealth," or else "wisdom," *i.e.*, sense and spirit; or "my hope of *deliverance*." But the text (CHETIB) is better, Thou dissolveth me (with fear, Exodus, 15. 15), *in the crash* (of the whirlwind; as *v.* 14, Note). [MAURER.] UMBREIT translates as a verb, "Thou *terrifiest* me." 23. This shows ch. 19. 25 cannot be restricted to Job's hope of a *temporal* deliverance. **death** — as in ch. 28. 22, the realm of the dead (Hebrews, 9. 27; Genesis, 3. 19). 24. Expressing Job's faith as to the state after death. Though one must go to the grave, yet He will no more afflict *in the ruin* of the body (so *Hebrew* for *grave*), there, if one has cried to him when being destroyed. The "stretching of His hand" to punish after death, answers antithetically to the raising "the cry" of prayer in the second clause. MAURER gives another translation which accords with the scope of *v.* 24-31; if it be natural for one in affliction to ask aid, why should it be considered (by the friends) wrong in my case? "Nevertheless does not a man in ruin stretch out his hand" (imploring help, *v.* 20; Lamentations, 1. 17)? If one be in his calamity (destruction) is there not therefore a "cry" (for aid)? Thus in the parallelism "cry" answers to "stretch — hand;" "in his calamity," to "in ruin." The negative of the first clause, is to be supplied in the second, as in *v.* 25 (ch. 28. 17). 25. May I not be allowed to complain of my calamity, and beg relief, seeing that I myself sympathized with those "in trouble" (*lit.*, *hard of day*; those who had a hard time of it). 26. I may be allowed to crave help, seeing that, "when I looked for good (on account of my piety and charity), yet evil," etc. **light** — (ch. 22. 28). 27. **bowels** — Regarded as the seat of deep feeling (Isaiah, 16. 11). **boiled** — Violently heated and agitated. **prevented** — Old English for *unexpectedly came upon* me, *surprised* me. 28. **mourning** — Rather, I move about *blackened*, though not by the sun; *i.e.*, whereas many are blackened by the sun, I am, by the heat of God's wrath (so "boiled," *v.* 27); the elephantiasis covering me with blackness of skin (*v.* 30), as with the garb of mourning (Jeremiah, 14. 2). This striking enigmatic form of *Hebrew* expression occurs, Isaiah, 29. 9. **stood up** — As an innocent man crying for justice in an assembled court (*v.* 20). 29. **dragons... owls** — Rather, *jackals, ostriches*, both of which utter dismal screams (Micah, 1. 8); in which respect, as also in their living amidst solitudes, the emblem of desolation, Job is their brother and companion, *i.e.*, resembles them. "Dragon," *Hebrew*, *Tannim*, usually means the crocodile; so perhaps here, its open jaws lifted towards heaven, and its noise making it seem as if it mourned over its fate. [BOCHART.] 30. **upon me** — Rather, as in 17 (Note), my skin is black (and falls away *from* me.) **my bones** —

(ch. 19. 20 ; Psalm 102. 5). 31. **organ** — Rather, *pipe* (ch. 21. 12 ; “ My joy is turned into the voice of weeping ” (Lamentations, 5. 15). These instruments are properly appropriated to *joy* (Isaiah, 30. 29, 32), which makes their use now in sorrow the sadder by contrast.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

**Ver. 1-40.** 1. Job proceeds to prove, that he deserved a better lot. As in ch. 29. he showed his uprightness as an emir, or magistrate, in *public* life, so in this chapter he vindicates his character in *private* life. 1-4. He asserts his guarding against being allured to sin by his senses. **think** — Rather, *cast a (lustful) look*. He not merely did not so, but put it out of the question by covenanting with his eyes against leading him into temptation (Proverbs, 6. 25 ; Matthew, 5. 28). 2. Had I let my senses tempt me to sin, “ what portion would there have been to me, *i.e.*, must I have expected) from (*lit. of*) God above, and what inheritance from (*lit. of*) the Almighty,” etc. [MAURER] (ch. 20. 29 ; 27. 13). 3. Answer to the question in *v.* 2. **strange** — Extraordinary. 4. Doth not he see, etc. ? Knowing this, I could only have expected “ destruction ” (*v.* 3), had I committed this sin (Proverbs, 5. 21). Job's abstinence from evil deeds. **vanity** — *i.e.*, falsehood (Psalm 12. 2). 6. Parenthetical. *Translate*, “ O that God would weigh me, etc., then would He know,” etc. 7. Connected with *v.* 6. **the way** — of God (ch. 23. 11 ; Jeremiah, 5. 5). A godly life. **heart...after...eyes** — If my heart coveted, what my eyes behold (Ecclesiastes, 11. 9 ; Joshua, 7. 21). **hands** — (Psalm 24. 4). 8. Apodosis to *v.* 5 and 7 ; the curses which he imprecates on himself, if he had done these things (Leviticus, 26. 16 ; Amos, 9. 14 ; Psalm 128. 2). **offspring** — Rather, *what I plant*, my harvests. 9-12. Job asserts his innocence of adultery. **deceived** — Hath let itself be seduced (Proverbs, 7. 8, etc. ; Genesis, 39. 7-12). **laid wait** — Until the husband went out. 10. **grind** — Turn the hand-mill. Be the most abject slave and concubine (Isaiah, 47. 2 ; 2 Samuel, 12. 11). 11. In the earliest times punished with death (Genesis, 38. 24). So in later times (Deuteronomy, 22. 22). Heretofore he had spoken only of sins against conscience ; now, one against the community, needing the cognizance of the judge. 12. (Proverbs, 6. 27-35 ; 8. 6-23, 26, 27). No crime more provokes God to send *destruction* as a *consuming fire*, none so desolates the soul. 13-23. Job affirms his freedom from unfairness towards his servants ; from harshness and oppression towards the needy. **despise the cause** — Refuse to do them justice. 14, 15. Parenthetical ; the reason why Job did not despise the cause of his servants. *Translate*, What then (had I done so) could I have done, when God arose (to call me to account) ; and when He visited (came to enquire), what could I have answered him ? 15. Slaveholders try to defend themselves by maintaining the *original* inferiority of the slave. But Malachi, 2. 10 ; Acts, 17. 26 ; Ephesians, 6. 9, make the common origin of masters and servants the argument for brotherly love being shown by the former to the latter. 16. **to fail** — In the vain expectation of relief (ch. 11. 20). 17. Arabian rulers of hospitality require the

stranger to be helped first, and to the best. 18. Parenthetical: asserting that he did the contrary to the things in *v.* 16, 17. **he** — the orphan. **guided her** — viz., the widow, by advice and protection. On this and and "a father" see ch. 29. 16. 19. **perish** — *i.e.*, ready to perish (ch. 29. 13). **loins** — The parts of the body, benefitted by Job, are poetically described as thanking him, the loins before naked, when clad by me, wished me every blessing. 21. "When (*i.e.*, because I saw," that I might calculate on "the help" of a powerful party in the court of justice — ("gate"), if I should be summoned by the injured fatherless. 22. Apodosis to *vs.* 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21. If I had done those crimes, I should have made a bad use of my influence (*my arm, figuratively, v.* 21): therefore, if I have done them let my *arm* (literally) suffer. Job alludes to Eliphaz's charge (ch. 22. 9). The first "arm" is rather *the shoulder*. The second "arm" is the *fore arm*. **from the bone** — *Lit., a reed*: hence the upper arm, above the elbow. **for** — *i.e.*, the reason why Job guarded against such sins. *Fear of God*, though he could escape man's judgment (Genesis, 39. 9), UMBREIT more spiritedly translates, Yea, destruction and terror from God might have befallen me (had I done so); mere *fear* not being the motive. **highness** — Majestic might. **endure** — I could have availed nothing against it. 24, 25. Job asserts his freedom from trust in money (1 Timothy, 6. 17). Here he turns to his duty towards *God*, as before he had spoken of his duty towards *himself*, and his *neighbour*. Covetousness is covert idolatry, as it transfers the heart from the Creator to the creature (Colossians, 3. 5). In *v.* 26, 27, he passes to overt idolatry. 26. If I looked unto the Sun (as an object of worship), *because* he shined; or to the Moon *because* she walked, etc. Sabaism (from *tsaba*, the heavenly hosts) was the earliest form of false worship. God is hence called in contradistinction "Lord of Sabaoth." The sun, moon, and stars, the brightest objects in nature, and seen everywhere, were supposed to be visible representatives of the invisible God. They had no temples, but were worshipped on high places and roofs of houses (Ezekiel, 8. 16; Deuteronomy, 4. 19; 2 Kings, 33. 5, 11). The *Hebrew* here for "sun" is *light*. Probably *light* was worshipped as the emanation from God, before its embodiments, the sun, etc. This worship prevailed in Chaldea; wherefore Job's exemption from the idolatry of his neighbours was the more exemplary. Our "Sun-day, Monday" or Moon-day, bear traces of Sabaism. 27. **enticed** — Away from God to idolatry. **kissed...hand** — *Adoration, lit.*, means this. In worshipping they used to kiss the hand, and then throw the kiss, as it were, towards the object of worship (1 Kings, 19. 18; Hosea, 13. 2). 28. The Mosaic law embodied subsequently the feeling of the godly from the earliest times against idolatry, as deserving judicial penalties: being treason against the Supreme King (Deuteronomy, 13. 9; 17. 2-7; Ezekiel, 8. 14-18). This passage therefore does not prove Job to have been subsequent to Moses. 29. **lifted up myself** — In malicious triumph (Proverbs, 17. 5; 24. 17; Psalm 7. 4). 30. **mouth** — *lit., palate*; (ch. 6. 30, Note). **wishing** — *lit.*, "so as to demand his (my enemy's) soul, *i.e.*, life by a curse." This verse parenthetically confirms *v.* 30. Job is the patriarchal age of the promise, anterior to the law, realizes the Gospel Spirit, which was the end of the law (*cf.* Leviticus, 19. 18; Deuteronomy, 23. 6, with Matthew, 5. 43.

44). 31. *i.e.*, Job's household said, O that we had Job's enemy to devour, we cannot rest satisfied till we have! But Job refrained from even wishing revenge (1 Samuel, 26. 8; 2 Samuel, 16. 9, 10). So Jesus Christ (Luke, 9. 54, 55). But, better (see *v.* 32), *translated*, "Who can show (*lit.*, *give*) the man who was not satisfied with the flesh (meat) provided by Job?" He never let a poor man leave his gate without giving him enough to eat. **traveller**—*lit.*, *way i.e.*, wayfarers; so expressed to include all of every kind (2 Samuel, 12. 4). 33. **Adam**—*Translated* by UMBREIT, "as men do" (Hosea, 6. 7, where see *Margin*). But *English Version* is more natural. The very same word for "hiding" is used in Genesis, 3. 8, 10, of Adam *hiding* himself from God. Job elsewhere alludes to the flood. So he might easily know of the fall, through the two links which connect Adam and Abraham (about Job's time) viz., Methuselah, and Shem. Adam is representative of fallen man's propensity to concealment (Proverbs, 28. 13). It was *from God* that Job did not "hide his iniquity in his bosom," as on the contrary it was from God that "Adam" hid in his lurking place. This disproves the *translation*, "as men:" for it is *from their fellowmen* that "men" are chiefly anxious to hide their real character as guilty. MAGEE, to make the comparison with Adam more exact, for my "bosom" *translates*, "lurking place." 34. Rather, the apodosis to *v.* 33, "Then let me be fear-stricken before a great multitude, let the contempt, etc., let me keep silence (the greatest disgrace to a patriot, heretofore so prominent in assemblies), and not go out," etc. A just retribution, that he who hides sin from God, should have it exposed before man (2 Samuel, 12. 12). But Job had not been so exposed, but on the contrary was esteemed in the assemblies of the *tribes*—"families"; a proof, he implies, that God does not hold him guilty of hiding sin (ch. 24. 16, contrasts with ch. 29. 21-25). 35. Job returns to his wish (ch. 13. 22; 19. 23). Omit *is*: "Behold my *sign*," *i.e.*, my mark of subscription to the statement just given in my defense: the *mark* of signature was originally a cross; and hence the letter Tau or T. *Translate* also, "O that the Almighty," etc. He marks "God" as the "One" meant in the first clause. Adversary, *i.e.*, he who contends with me, refers also to God. The vagueness is designed, to express "whoever it be that *judiciously oppose* me,"—the Almighty if it be He. **had written a book**—Rather, "would write down his charge." 36. So far from hiding the adversary's "answer" or "charge" through fear, "I would take it on my shoulders" as a public honour (Isaiah, 9. 6.) **a crown**—Not a mark of shame, but of distinction (Isaiah, 62. 3). 37. A good conscience imparts a princely dignity before man and a free assurance in approaching God. This can be realized, not in Job's way (ch. 42. 5, 6); but only through Jesus Christ (Hebrews, 10. 22). 38. Personification. The complaints of the unjustly-ousted proprietors are transferred to the lands themselves (*v.* 20; Genesis, 4. 10; Habakuk, 2. 11). "If I have unjustly acquired lands (ch. 24. 2; Isaiah, 5. 8). **furrows**—The specification of these makes it likely, he implies in this, "If I paid not the labourer, for *tillage*:" as next verse, "If I paid him not for gathering in the *fruits*." Thus of the four clauses in *v.* 38, 39, the 1st refers to the same subject as the 4th, the 2nd is connected with the 3rd by *introverted parallelism*. James, 5. 4, who plainly alludes to this



passage: cf. "Lord of Sabaoth" with *v.* 26 here. 39. **lose...life** — Not *lit.*, but "harassed to death;" until he gave up his land *gratis* [MAURER]; as in Judges, 16. 16; "suffered him to languish" by taking away his means of living [UMBREIT], (1 Kings, 21. 19). 40. **thistles** — Or *brambles, thorns*. **cockle** — *lit., noxious weeds*. **the words...ended** — *i.e.*, in the controversy with the friends. He spoke in the book afterwards, but not to *them*. At 37 would be the regular conclusion in strict act. But 38-40 is natural to be added by one whose mind in agitation recurs to its sense of innocence, even after it has come to the point usual to stop at; this takes away the appearance of rhetorical artifices. Hence the transposition by EICHORN of 38-40 to follow 25, is quite unwarranted.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

**Ver. 1-22.** SPEECH OF ELIHU (ch. 32-37). 1-6. Prose (poetry begins with "I am young.") 1. **because, etc.** — and because they could not prove to him that he was unrighteous. 2. **Elihu** — meaning "God is Jehovah." In his name, and character as messenger between God and Job, he shadows forth Jesus Christ (ch. 32. 23-26). **Barachel** — meaning "God blesses." Both names indicate the piety of the family, and their separation from idolaters. **Buzite** — Buz was son of Nahor, brother of Abraham. Hence was named a region in Arabia Deserta (Jeremiah, 25. 23). **Ram** — Aram, nephew of Buz. Job was probably of an elder generation than Elihu. However the identity of names does not necessarily prove the identity of persons. The particularity with which Elihu's descent is given, as contrasted with the others, led LIGHT-FOOT to infer, Elihu was the author of the book. But the reason for particularity was, probably, that Elihu was *less known* than the three called "friends" of Job; and that it was right for the poet to mark especially him who was mainly to solve the problem of the book **rather than God** — *i.e.*, was more eager to *vindicate himself than God*. In ch. 4. 17, Job denies that *man can be more just than God*. UMBREIT translates, "Before (in the presence of) God." 3. Though silenced in argument, they held their opinion still. 4. **had spoken** — *Hebrew, in words*, referring rather to *his own* "words" of reply, which he had long ago ready, but kept back in deference to seniority of the friends who spoke. 6. **was afraid** — the root meaning in *Hebrew* to *crawl* (Deuteronomy, 32. 24). 7. **days** — *i.e.*, the aged (ch. 15. 10). 8. Elihu claims inspiration, as a divinely-commissioned messenger to Job, (ch. 33. 6, 23); and that claim is not contradicted in ch. 42. Translate, "But the spirit (which God puts) in man, and the inspiration etc., is that which giveth," etc., it is not mere "years" which give understanding (Proverbs, 2. 6; John, 2. 22). 9. **Great** — Rather, *old* (*v.* 6). So *Hebrew*, in Genesis, 25. 23, "Greater less," for *the elder, the younger*. **judgment** — what is right. 10. Rather, *I say*. **opinion** — Rather, *knowledge*. 11. Therefore Elihu was present from the first. **reasons** — *lit., understandings, i.e.*, the meaning intended by words. **whilst** — I waited *until* you should discover a suitable reply to Job. 13. This has been so ordered, "lest

you should "pride yourselves on having overcome him by your "wisdom" (Jeremiah, 9. 23, the great aim of the book of Job); and that you may see, "God alone can thrust him down," *i.e.*, confute him, "not man." So Elihu grounds his confutation not on the maxim of sages, as the friends did, but on his special commission from God (*v.* 8; ch. 33. 4, 6). 14. I am altogether unprejudiced. For it is not I, whom he addressed. "Your speeches" have been influenced by irritation. 15. Here Elihu turns from the friends to Job; and so pass from the second person to the third; a transition frequent in a rebuke (ch. 18. 3, 4). **they left off** — words were taken from them. 17. **my part** — for my part. **opinion** — knowledge. 18. "I am full of words," whereas the friends have not a word more to say. **the spirit** — (*v.* 8; ch. 33. 4; Jeremiah, 20. 9; Acts, 18. 5). 19. **belly** — Bosom: from which the words of Orientalists in speaking seem to come more than with us; they speak *gutterally*. "Like (new) wine (in fermentation) without a vent," to work itself off. *New wine is kept in new goatskin bottles.* This fittingly applies to the *young* Elihu, as contrasted with the *old* friends (Matthew, 9. 17). 20. **refreshed** — *lit., that there may be air to me* (I Samuel, 16. 23). 21. "May I never accept," etc. Elihu alludes to Job's words (ch. 13. 8, 10), wherein he complains that the friends plead for God's partially, "accepting His person." Elihu says, he will not do so, but act impartially between God and Job. "And I will not give flattery," etc. (Proverbs, 24. 23). 22. **take me away** — as a punishment (Psalm 102. 24).

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

**Ver. 1-33.** ADDRESS TO JOB, AS (ch. 32.) TO THE FRIENDS. 2. **mouth** — Rather, *palate*, whereby the taste *discerns*. Every man speaks with his mouth, but few, as Elihu, *try* their words *with discrimination* first, and only ask what is really good (ch. 6. 30; 12. 11). **hath spoken** — Rather, *Proceeds to speak*. 3. I will speak according to my inward conviction. **clearly** — Rather, *purely*: sincerely, not distorting the truth through passion, as the friends. 4. "The Spirit of God hath made me," as He did thee: latter clause of *v.* 6 (Genesis, 2. 7). Therefore thou needest not fear me, as thou wouldest God (*v.* 7; ch. 9. 34). On the other hand, "the breath of the Almighty hath *inspired* me" (as ch. 32. 8); not as *English Version*, "given me life:" therefore "I am, according to thy wish (ch. 9. 32, 33), in God's stead" to thee; a "daysman," umpire, or mediator, between God and thee. So Elihu was designed by the Holy Ghost to be a type of Jesus Christ (*v.* 23-26). 5. Images from a court of justice. **stand up** — alluding to Job's words (ch. 30. 20). 6. Note (*v.* 4; ch. 31. 35; 13. 3, 20, 21). **formed** — though acting as God's representative, I am but a creature, like thyself. Arabic, *pressed together*, as a mass of clay by the potter, in *forming* a vessel. [UMBREIT.] *Hebrew*, cut off, as the portion taken from the clay to *form* it. [MAURER.] 7. **hand** — alluding to Job's words (ch. 13. 21). 8. **thy words** — (ch. 10. 7; 16. 17; 23. 11, 12; 27. 5, 6; 29. 14). In ch. 9. 30; 13. 23, Job had acknowledged sin; but the general *spirit* of his words was to maintain himself to be "clean:" and to

charge God with injustice. He went too far on the opposite side in opposing the friends' false charge of *hypocrisy*. Even the godly, though willing to confess themselves sinners in *general*, often dislike sin in *particular* to be brought as a charge against them. Affliction is therefore needed to bring them to feel that sin *in them* deserves even worse than they suffer, and that God does them no injustice. Then at last humbled under God they find *affliction is for their real good*, and so at last it is taken away either here or at least at death. To teach this is Elihu's mission.

9. **clean**—spotless. 10. **occasions**—for hostility: *lit., enmities* (ch. 13. 24; 16. 9; 19. 11; 30. 21). 11. (ch. 13. 27). **marketh**—narrowly watches (ch. 14. 16; 7. 12; 31. 4). 12. **in this**—view of God and His government. It cannot be that God should jealously “watch” man, though “spotless,” as an “enemy,” or as one afraid of him as an equal. For “God is greater than man.” There must be sin in man, even though he be no hypocrite, which needs correction by suffering for the sufferer's good. 13. (Isaiah, 45. 9). **his matters**—ways. Our part is, not to “strive” with God, but to *submit*. To believe, it is right, because He does it, not because we see all the *reasons* for His doing it. 14. *Translate*, “Yet man *regardeth* it not: or rather, as UMBREIT, “Yea twice (He repeats the warning),—if man gives no heed” to the first warning, Elihu implies that God's reason for sending affliction is, because, when God has communicated His will in various ways, man in prosperity has not heeded it: God therefore must try what affliction will effect (John, 15. 2; Psalm, 62. 11; Isaiah, 28. 10, 13). 15. **slumberings**—light, as opposed to “deep sleep.” Elihu has in view Eliphaz (ch. 4. 13), and also Job himself (ch. 7. 14). “Dreams” in sleep, and “visions” of actual apparitions, were among the ways whereby God then spake to man (Genesis, 20. 3). 16. *Lit., sealeth* (their ears) to himself by warnings, *i.e.*, with the sureness and secrecy of a seal He reveals His warnings. [UMBREIT.] To seal up securely (ch. 37. 7). On the “openeth” (see ch. 36. 10). 17. **purpose**—*Margin, work*. So ch. 36. 9. So “business” in a bad sense (1 Samuel, 20. 19). Elihu alludes to Job's words (ch. 17. 11). “Pride” is an open “pit” (*v.* 18), which God hides or covers up, lest man should fall into it. Even the godly need to learn the lesson, which trials teach, to “*humble* themselves under the mighty hand of God.” 18. **his soul**—his life. **the pit**—the grave; a symbol of hell. **perishing by the sword**—*i.e.*, a violent death; in the Old Testament a symbol of the future punishment of the ungodly. 19. When man does not heed warnings of the night, he is chastened, etc. The new thought suggested by Elihu is that affliction is *disciplinary* (ch. 36. 10): *for the good* of the godly. **multitude**—so the *Margin, Hebrew* (KERI). Better with the text (CHETIB), “And with the perpetual (strong) *contest* of his bones,” the never-resting fever in his bones (Psalm 38. 3). [UMBREIT.] 20. **life**—*i.e.*, the *appetite*, which ordinarily sustains “life” (ch. 38. 39; see Psalm 107. 18; Ecclesiastes, 12. 5). The taking away of desire for food by sickness symbolizes the removal by affliction of lust, for things which foster the spiritual fever of pride. **soul**—desire. 21. His flesh once prominent “can no more be seen.” His bones once not seen now appear prominent. **stick out**—*lit., are bare*. The *Margin, Hebrew* (KERI) reading. The text (CHETIB) reads it a noun *are become*.

"bareness." The Keri was no doubt an explanatory reading of transcribers. 22. **destroyers** — *angels of death* commissioned by God to end man's life (2 Samuel, 24. 16; Psalm 78. 49). The *death pains* personified may, however, be meant; so "gnawers" (Note, ch. 30. 17). 23. Elihu refers to himself as the divinely-sent (ch. 32. 8; 33. 6) "messenger," the "interpreter" to explain to Job and vindicate God's righteousness: such a one Eliphaz had denied that Job could look for (ch. 5. 1), and Job (ch. 9. 33) had wished for such a "daysman" or umpire between him and God. The "messenger" of good is antithetical to "the destroyers" (v. 23). **with him** — If there be vouchsafed *to the sufferer*. The office of the interpreter is stated "to show unto man God's uprightness" in His dealings; or, as UMBREIT, "man's upright course towards God" (Proverbs, 14. 2). The former is better: Job maintained his own "uprightness" (ch. 16. 17; 27. 5, 6), Elihu on the contrary maintains God's, and that man's true uprightness lies in submission to God. "One among a thousand" is a man rarely to be found. So Jesus Christ (Song of Solomon, 5. 10). Elihu the God-sent mediator of a *temporal* deliverance (v. 24-26) is a type of the God-man Jesus Christ the Mediator of *eternal* deliverance: "the messenger of the covenant" (Malachi, 3. 1). This is the wonderful work of the Holy Ghost, that persons and events move in their own sphere in such a way as unconsciously to shadow forth Him, whose "testimony is the Spirit of prophecy;" as the same point may be centre of a small and of a vastly larger concentric centre. 24. Apodosis to 23. **He** — God. **deliver** — *Lit., redeem*: in it and "ransom" there is reference to the *consideration*, on account of which God pardons and relieves the sufferers; here it is primarily the intercession of Elihu. But the language is too strong for its full meaning to be *exhausted* by this. The Holy Ghost has suggested language which receives its *full* realization only in the "eternal redemption found" by God in the price paid by Jesus Christ for it, *i.e.*, His blood and meritorious intercession (Hebrews, 9. 12). "Obtained," *lit., found*: implying the earnest zeal, wisdom, and faithfulness of the *finder*, and the newness and joyousness of the *finding*. Jesus Christ could not but have *found* it, but still His *seeking* it was needed. [BENGEL.] (Luke, 15. 8). God the Father is the Finder (Psalm 89. 19). Jesus Christ the Redeemer, to whom He said, *Redeem* (so *Hebrew*) him from going, etc. (2 Corinthians, 5. 19). **ransom** — Used in a general sense by Elihu, but meant by the Holy Ghost in its strict sense as applied to Jesus Christ, of a *price* paid for deliverance (Exodus, 21. 30), an *atonement* (*i.e.*, means of selling *at once*, *i.e.*, reconciling *two* who are estranged), a *covering*, as of the ark with pitch, typical of what covers us sinners from wrath (Genesis, 6. 14; Psalm 32. 1). The pit is primarily here the *grave* (Isaiah, 38. 17), but the spiritual pit is mainly shadowed forth (Zechariah, 9. 11). 25-28. Effects of restoration to God's favor; *lit.*, to Job a temporal revival; spiritually, an eternal *regeneration*. The striking words cannot be restricted to their temporal meaning, as used by Elihu (1 Peter, 1. 11, 12). **his flesh shall be fresher than a child's** — So Naaman, 2 Kings, 5. 14; spiritually, John, 3. 3-7. 26. Job shall no longer pray to God, as he complains, in vain (ch. 23. 3, 8, 9). True especially to the redeemed in Jesus Christ (John, 16. 23-27.) **He (Job) shall see his face** — Or *God shall make*

him to see His face. [MAURER.] God shall no longer "hide His face" (ch. 13. 24). True to the believer, now, John, 14. 21, 22; eternally, Psalm 17. 15; John, 17. 24. **his** (God's) **righteousness**—God will again make the restored Job, no longer ("perverted — right," v. 27), doubt God's *justice*, but to justify him in His dealings. The penitent justifies God (Psalm 51. 4). So the believer is made to see God's righteousness in Jesus Christ (Isaiah, 45. 24; 46. 13). 27. **He looketh**—God. Rather, with UMBREIT, "Now he (*the restored penitent*) *singeth joyfully* (answering to "joy," v. 26; Psalm 51. 12) before men, and saith, etc. (Proverbs, 25. 20; Psalm 66. 16; 116. 14). **perverted**—Made the straight crooked: as Job had misrepresented God's character. **profited**—*Lit., was made even* to me. Rather, "My punishment was not commensurate with my sin" (so Zophar, ch. 11. 6); the reverse of what Job heretofore said (ch. 16. 17; Psalm 103. 10; Ezra, 9. 13). 28. Note v. 24; rather, as *Hebrew text* (*English Version* reads as *Margin, Hebrew, Keri*, "his soul, his life"), "He hath delivered *my* soul, etc., *my* life." Continuation of the penitent's testimony to the people. **light**—(v. 30; ch. 3. 16, 20; Psalm 56. 13; Ecclesiastes, 11. 7). 29. *Margin, twice and thrice*, alluding to v. 14; once, by visions, 15-17; secondly, by afflictions, 19-22; now, by the "messenger," thirdly, 23. 30. Referring to v. 28 (Psalm 56. 13). 32. **justify**—To do thee justice; and, if I can, consistently with it, to declare thee innocent. At v. 33, Elihu pauses for a reply; then proceeds; ch. 34.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

**Ver. 1-37.** 1. **answered**—Proceeded. 2. This ch. is addressed also to the "friends," as ch. 33. to Job alone. 3. *Palate*; (Note, ch. 12. 11; ch. 33. 2). 4. **judgment**—Let us select among the conflicting sentiments advanced, what will stand the test of examination. 5. **judgment**—My right. Job's own words (ch. 13. 18; 27. 2) 6. *i.e.*, Were I to renounce my right (*i.e.*, confess myself guilty), I should lie. Job virtually had said so (ch. 27. 4, 5; 6. 28). MAURER, not so well, "Notwithstanding my right (innocence) I am treated as a liar by God," by his afflicting me. **my wound**.—*Lit., mine arrow*, viz., by which I am pierced. So "*my stroke*" (hand *Margin*, ch. 23. 2). My sickness (ch. 6. 4; 16. 13). **without transgression**—Without fault of mine to deserve it (ch. 16. 17). 7. (ch. 15. 16). Image from the camel. **scorning**—Against God (ch. 15. 4). 8. Job virtually goeth in company (makes common cause) with the wicked, by taking up their sentiments (ch. 9. 22, 23, 30; 21. 7-15), or at least by saying, that those who act on such sentiments are unpunished (Malachi, 3. 14). To deny God's righteous government, because we do not see the reasons of His acts, is virtually to take part with the ungodly. 9. **with God**—In intimacy (Psalm 50. 18). 10. The true answer to Job, which God follows up (ch. 38). Man is to *believe* God's ways are right, because they are His, not because we fully *see* they are so (Romans, 9. 14; Deuteronomy, 32. 4; Genesis, 18. 25). 11. Partly here; fully, hereafter (Jeremiah, 32. 19; Romans, 2. 6; 1 Peter, 1. 17; Revelation, 22. 12). 12. (ch. 8. 3). In opposition to

Job, v. 5. **will not** — Cannot. 13. If the world were not God's property, as having been made by Him, but committed to His charge by some Superior, it might be possible for Him to act unjustly, as he would not thereby be injuring Himself; but as it is, for God to act unjustly would undermine the whole order of the world, and so would injure God's own property (ch. 36. 23). **disposed** — Hath founded (Isaiah, 44. 7), established the circle of the globe. 14, 15. "If He were to set His heart on man," either to injure him, or to take strict account of his sins. The connection supports rather [UMBREIT], "If He had regard to Himself (only), and were to gather unto Himself (Psalm 104. 29) man's spirit, etc., (which He sends forth, Psalm 104. 30; Ecclesiastes, 12. 7), all flesh must perish together, etc. (Genesis, 3. 19). God's loving preservation of His creatures proves He cannot be selfish, and therefore cannot be unjust. 16. In v. 2, Elihu had spoken to *all* in general, now he calls *Job's* special attention. 17. Can even He who (in thy view) hateth right (justice) govern?" The government of the world be impossible if injustice were sanctioned. God must be just, because He governs (2 Samuel, 23. 3). **govern** — *Lit., bind, viz., by authority* (so "reign," *Margin*, 1 Samuel, 9. 17). UMBREIT translates for "govern," *repress wrath, viz., against Job for his accusations.* **most just** — Rather, "Him who is at once mighty and just" (in His government of the world). 18. *Lit., (Is it fit) to be said to a king?* It would be a gross outrage to reproach thus an earthly monarch, much more the King of kings, (Exodus, 22. 28). But MAURER with LXX. and *Vulgate* reads (It is not fit to accuse of injustice Him) *who says to a king, Thou art wicked, to princes, Ye are ungodly, i.e., who punishes impartially the great, as the small.* This accords with v. 19. 19. Acts, 10. 34; Chronicles, 19. 7; Proverbs, 22. 2; ch. 31. 15. **they** — "The rich" and "princes" who offend God. **the people** — *viz., of the guilty princes; guilty also themselves.* **at midnight** — Image from a night-attack of an enemy on a camp, which becomes an easy prey (Exodus, 12. 29, 30). **without hand** — Without *visible* agency, by the mere word of God (so ch. 20. 36; Zechariah, 4. 6; Daniel, 2. 34). 21. God's omniscience and omnipotence enable Him to execute immediate justice. He needs not to be long on the "watch," as Job thought (ch. 7. 12; 2 Chronicles, 16. 9; Jeremiah, 32. 19). 22. **shadow of death** — Thick darkness (Amos, 9. 2, 3; Psalm 139. 12). 23. (1 Corinthians, 10. 13; Lamentations, 3. 32; Isaiah, 27. 8). Better, as UMBREIT, "He does not (needs not to) regard (as in v. 14; Isaiah, 41. 20), may long (so *Hebrew*, Genesis, 46. 29), in order that he may go (be brought by God) into judgment." *Lit., "Lest his (attention) upon men" (ch. 11. 10, 11).* So v. 24, "without number" ought to be translated, "without (needing any) searching out," such as has to be made in human judgments. 24. **break in pieces** — (Psalm 2. 9; ch. 12. 18; Daniel, 2. 21). 25. **therefore** — Because He knows all things (v. 21). He knows their works, without a formal investigation (v. 24). **in the night** — Suddenly, unexpectedly (v. 20). *Fitly in the night*, as it was in it that the godless hid themselves (v. 22). UMBREIT, less simply, for "overturneth," translates, "walketh:" *i.e., God is ever on the alert, discovering all wickedness.* 26. **strikereth** — Chasteneth. **as** — *i.e., because they are wicked.* **sight of others** — Sinners hid themselves in darkness; therefore they are punished before all, in open day. Image from the

place of public execution (ch. 40. 12; Exodus, 14. 30; 2 Samuel, 12. 12). 27, 28. The grounds of their punishment in *v.* 26; *v.* 28, states in what respect they "considered not God's ways," viz., by *oppression*, whereby "they caused the cry," etc. 20. (Proverbs, 16. 7; Isaiah, 26. 3). **make trouble** — Rather, *condemn* (Romans, 8. 33, 34). MAURER, from the reference being only to *the godless*, in the next clause, and *v.* 20, *translates*, "When God keeps quiet (leaves men to *perish*) Psalm 83. 1: [UMBREIT,] from the Arabic (*strikes to the earth*), who shall *condemn* Him as unjust?" *v.* 17. **hideth... face** — (ch. 23. 8, 9; Psalm 13. 1). **it be done** — Whether it be against a guilty nation (2 Kings, 18. 9-12), or an individual, that God acts so. 30. "Ensnared" into sin (1 Kings, 12. 28, 30). Or rather, *enthralled by further oppression*, *v.* 26-28. 31. Job accordingly says so (ch. 40. 3-5; Micah, 7. 9; Leviticus, 26. 41). It was to lead him to this, that Elihu was sent. Though no hypocrite, Job, like all, had sin, therefore through affliction he was to be brought to humble himself under God. *All* sorrow is a proof of the common heritage of sin, in which the godly shares: and therefore he ought to regard it as a merciful correction. UMBREIT and MAURER lose this by *translating*, as the *Hebrew* will bear, "Has any a right to say to God, I have borne chastisement and yet have not sinned?" (so *v.* 6). **borne** — viz., the penalty of sin, as in Leviticus, 5. 1, 17. **offend** — *Lit.*, to deal *destructively* or *corruptly* (Nehemiah, 1. 7). 32. ch. 10. 2; Psalm 32. 8; 19. 12; 139. 23, 24. **no more** — Proverbs, 28. 13; Ephesians, 4. 22. 33. Rather "should God recompense (sinners) according to thy mind? Then it is for thee to reject and to choose, and not me," UMBREIT; or as MAURER, "*For thou hast rejected God's way of recompensing; state therefore thy way, for thou must choose, not I,*" *i.e.*, it is thy part, not mine, to show a better way than God's. 34, 35. Rather, men, etc., *will* say to me, and the wise man (*v.* 2. 10), who hearkens to me (will say), "Job hath spoken," etc. 36. *Margin*, not so well, *My father*, Elihu addressing God. This title does not elsewhere occur in Job. **tried** — by calamities. **answers for wicked men** — (See Note, *v.* 8). Trials of the godly are not removed until they produce the effect designed. 37. **clappeth... hands** — In scorn (ch. 27. 23; Ezekiel, 21. 7.) **multiplieth... words** — (ch. 11. 2; 35. 16). To his original "sin," to correct which trials have been sent, "he adds *rebellion*," *i.e.*, words railing God's justice.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

**Ver. 1-16.** 2. **more than** — Rather as ch. 9. 2; 25. 4; "I am righteous (*lit.*, my righteousness is) before God." *English Version*, however, agrees with ch. 9. 17; 16. 12-17; 27. 2-6. Ch. 4. 17 is susceptible of either rendering. Elihu means Job said so, not in so many words, but *virtually*. 3. Rather, explanatory of "this" in *v.* 2, "That thou thyself, (to thyself, as if a distinct person,) What advantage is it (thy integrity) to thee? What profit have I (by integrity) more than (I should have) by my sin?" *i.e.*, more than if I had sinned (ch. 34. 9). Job had said that the wicked, who use *these very words*, do not suffer for it

(ch. 21. 13-15); whereby he virtually sanctioned their sentiments. The same change of persons from oblique to direct address occurs (ch. 19. 28; 22. 17). 4. **companions** — Those entertaining like sentiments with thee (ch. 34. 8, 36). 5-8. Elihu like Eliphaz (ch. 22. 2, 3, 12), shows that God is too exalted in nature to be susceptible of benefit or hurt from the righteousness or sin of man respectively: it is themselves that they benefit by righteousness, or hurt by sin. **behold the clouds, which are higher than thou** — Spoken with irony. Not only are they higher than thou, but thou can not even reach them clearly with the eye. Yet these are not as high as God's seat. God is therefore too exalted to be dependant on man. Therefore He has no inducement to injustice in His dealings with man. When He afflicts, it must be from a different motive: viz., the good of the sufferer. 6. **what doest** — How canst thou affect Him? **unto him** — That can hurt Him? (Jeremiah, 7. 19; Proverbs, 8. 36). 7. (Psalm 16. 2; Proverbs, 9. 12; Luke, 17. 10). 9. (Ecclesiastes, 4. 1). Elihu states in Job's words (ch. 24. 12; 30. 20), the difficulty; the "cries" of "the oppressed" not being heard might lead man to think that wrongs are not punished by Him. 10-13. But the reason is, that the innocent sufferers often do not humbly seek God for succor; so to their "pride" is to be laid the blame of their ruin: also because 13-16 they, as Job, instead of waiting God's time in pious trust, are prone to despair of His justice, when it is not immediately visible (ch. 33. 19-26). If the sufferer would apply to God with a humbled, penitent spirit, He would hear. **Where, etc.** — (Jeremiah, 2. 6, 8; Isaiah, 51. 13). **songs** — Of joy at deliverance (Psalm 42. 8; 149. 5; Acts, 16. 25). **in the night** — *Unexpectedly* (ch. 34. 20, 25). Rather, *in calamity*. 11. Man's spirit which distinguishes him from the brute, is the strongest proof of God's beneficence: by the use of it we may understand that God is the Almighty helper of all sufferers who humbly seek him; and that they err who do not so seek him. **fowls** — (ch. 28. 21; Note). 12. **There** — Rather, *Then*, (when none humbly casts himself on God, *v.* 10). They cry proudly *against* God, rather than humbly *to* God. So, as the design of affliction is to humble the sufferer, there can be no answer until "pride" gives place to humble penitent prayer (Psalm 10. 4; Jeremiah, 13. 17). 13. Vanity, *i.e.*, cries uttered in an unhumbled spirit, *v.* 12, which applies in some degree to Job's cries still more to those of the wicked (ch. 27. 9; Proverbs, 15. 29). 14. Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see Him (as a *temporal* deliverer: for he did look for a Redeemer *after death*: (ch. 19. 25-27), which passage can not consistently with Elihu's assertion here be interpreted of "seeing" a *temporal* "Redeemer,") ch. 7. 7; 9. 12; 23. 3, 8, 9, yet judgment, etc., therefore trust, etc. But the *Hebrew* favours MAURER "How much less (will God — regard, *v.* 13), since thou sayest, that He does not regard thee." So in ch. 4. 19. Thus Elihu alludes to Job's words (ch. 19. 7; 30. 20). **judgment** — *i.e.*, thy *cause*, thy *right*; as in Psalm 9. 16; Proverbs. 31. 5, 8. **trust** — Rather, *wait thou* on Him patiently, until He take up thy cause (Psalm 37. 7). 15. *As it is because* Job waited *not* trustingly and patiently (*v.* 14; Numbers, 20. 12 Zephaniah, 3. 2; Micah, 7. 9), *God hath visited, etc., yet still he has not taken* (severe) *cognizance of the great multitude* (*English Version wrongly, "extremity"*) of sins: therefore Job should not complain of



being punished with undue severity (ch. 7. 20; II. 6). MAURER translates, "Because His anger hath not visited (hath not immediately punished Job for his impious complaints), nor has He taken *strict* (great) cognizance of his *folly* (sinful speeches), therefore," etc. For "folly" UMBREIT translates with the Rabbins, *multitude*. GESENIUS reads with LXX. and *Vulgate* needlessly, "transgression." 16. Apodosis to 15. **in vain** — Rashly.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

**Ver. 1-33.** 1, 2. Elihu maintains, that afflictions are to the **godly** disciplinary, in order to lead them to attain a higher moral worth, and that the reason for their continuance is not, as the friends asserted, on account of the sufferer's extraordinary guilt, but because the discipline has not yet attained its object, viz., to lead him to humble himself penitently before God (Isaiah, 9. 13; Jeremiah, 5. 3.) This is Elihu's *fourth* speech. He thus exceeds the ternary number of the others. Hence his formula of politeness, *v. 2, Lit, Wait but yet a little for me*. Bear with me a little further. *I have yet* (much ch. 32. 18-20). There are Chaldeisms in this verse, agreeably to the view that the scene of the book is near the Euphrates and the Chaldees. 3. **from afar** — Not trite common-places, but drawn from God's mighty works. **ascribe righteousness** — Whereas Job had ascribed unrighteousness (ch. 34. 10, 12). A man in enquiring into God's ways, should at the outset *presume* they are all just, be *willing* to find them so, and *expect* that the result of investigation will prove them to be so; such a one will never be disappointed. [BARNES.] 4. I will not "speak wickedly for God," as the friends, ch. 3. 4, 7, 8; *i.e.*, vindicate God by unsound arguments. **he that is perfect, etc.** — Rather as the parallelism requires, "a man of *integrity in sentiments* is with thee" (is he with whom thou hast to do). Elihu means himself as opposed to the dishonest reasonings of the friends (ch. 1. 34). 5. Rather, *Strength of understanding* (heart) the force of the repetition of "mighty" is, "mighty" as God is, none is too low to be "despised" by Him; for His "might" lies especially in "His strength of understanding," whereby he searches out the most minute things, so as to give to each his right. Elihu confirms his exhortation (ch. 35. 14). **right . . . poor** — He espouses the cause of the afflicted. 7. (1 Peter, 2. 12). God does not forsake the godly, as Job implied, but "establishes," and *makes* them *sit* on the throne as kings (1 Samuel, 2. 8; Psalm 113. 7, 8). True of believers in the highest sense, already in part, 1 Peter, 2. 9; Revelation, 1. 6; hereafter fully, Revelation, 5. 10; ch. 22. 5. **and they shall be** — *That they may be*. 8-10. If they be afflicted, it is no proof that they are hypocrites, as the friends maintain; or that God disregards them, and is indifferent whether men are good or bad, as Job asserts: God is thereby "disciplining them," and "showing them their sins," and they bow in a right spirit under God's visiting hand, the greatest blessings ensue. 9. **work** — Transgression. **that . . . exceedeth** — "In that they behaved themselves mightily," *lit., great; i.e.*, presumptuously, and, at least, self-confidently. 10. (ch. 33. 16-18, 23). 11. **serve** — *i.e.*,

worship; as in Isaiah, 19. 23, God is to be supplied (cf. Isaiah, 1. 19, 20). 12. (ch. 33. 18). **without knowledge** — *In, i.e., on account of their foolishness* (ch. 4. 20, 21). 13-15. Same sentiment as v. 11, 12, expanded. 13. **hypocrites** — Or, the ungodly [MAURER]; but “hypocrites” is perhaps a distinct class from the openly wicked (v. 12). **heap up wrath** — Of God against themselves (Romans, 2. 5). UMBREIT translates, “nourish *their wrath against God,*” instead of “crying” unto Him. This suits well the parallelism and the Hebrew. But *English Version,* gives a good parallelism, “hypocrites” answering to “cry not” (ch. 27. 8, 10); “heap up wrath” against themselves, to “He bindeth them” with fetters of affliction (v. 8). 14. Rather, (Deuteronomy, 23. 17), *Their life* is (ended) as that of (*lit., among*) *the unclean,*” prematurely and dishonourably. So the second clauses answers to the first. A warning that Job make not common cause with the wicked (ch. 34. 36). 15. **poor** — *The afflicted pious.* **openeth . . . ears** — (v. 10); so as to be *admonished* in their straits (“oppression”) to seek God penitently, and so be “delivered” (ch. 33. 16, 17, 23-27). 16. Rather, “He *will* lead forth thee also out of *the jaws of a strait*” (Psalm 18. 19; 118. 5). The “broad place” expresses the *liberty,* and the well-supplied “table” the *abundance* of the prosperous (Psalm 23. 5; Isaiah, 25. 6). 17. Rather, “But *if* thou art fulfilled (*i.e., entirely filled*) with the judgment of the wicked (*i.e., the guilt* incurring judgment [MAURER]; or rather, as UMBREIT, referring to ch. 34. 5, 6, 7, 36, the *judgment pronounced on God by the guilty* in misfortunes) judgment (*God’s judgment on the wicked;* Jeremiah, 51. 9, playing on the double meaning of “judgment”), and justice shall closely follow each other. [UMBREIT.] 18. (Numbers, 16. 45; Psalm, 49. 6, 7; Matthew, 16. 26). Even the “ransom” by Jesus Christ (ch. 33. 24), will be of no avail to willful despisers (Hebrews, 10. 26-29). **with his stroke** — ch. 34. 26). UMBREIT translates, “Beware lest the wrath of God (thy severe calamity) *lead thee to scorn*” (ch. 34. 7; 27. 23). This accords better with the verb in the parallel clause, which ought to be translated, “Let not the great ransom (of money, which thou canst give) *seduce* thee.” (*Margin, Turn thee aside,* as if thou couldst deliver thyself from “wrath” by it). As the “scorn” in the first clause answers to the “judgment of the wicked,” v. 17, so “ransom, seduce” to “Will he esteem riches,” v. 19. Thus v. 18 is the transition between v. 17 and 19. 19. **forces of strength** — *i.e., resources of wealth* (Psalm 49. 7; Proverbs, 11. 4). 20. **desire** — *Pant for.* Job had *wished for death* (ch. 3. 3-9, etc.). **night** — John, 9. 4. **when** — Rather, *whereby.* **cut off** — *Lit., ascend* as the corn, cut and lifted upon the wagon or stack, (v. 26); so *cut off, disappear.* **in their place** — *Lit., under themselves;* so without moving from their place, on the spot *suddenly* (ch. 40. 12). [MAURER.] UMBREIT’S translation, “To *ascend* (which is really, as thou wilt find to thy cost, to *descend*) to the people *below,*” (*lit., under themselves*), answers better to the parallelism and the Hebrew. Thou pantest for death as desirable, but it is a “night” or *region of darkness,* thy fancied *ascent* (amelioration) will prove a *descent* (deterioration, ch. 10. 22); therefore desire it not. 21. **regard** — *Lit., turn thyself to.* **Iniquity** — viz., presumptuous speaking against God (ch. 34. 5, and above, v. 17, 18: Note). **rather than** — To bear “affliction” with pious patience. Men think it an alleviation to complain against God. But

this is adding sin to sorrow; it is sin, not sorrow, which can really hurt us. (contrast Hebrews, II. 25). 22-25. God is, not to be impiously arraigned, but to be praised for His might, shown in His works. **exalteth**—Rather, *doeth lofty things*, shows His exalted power [UMBREIT,] (Psalm 21. 13). **teacheth**—(Psalm 94. 12, etc.). The connexion is, returning to *v.* 5, God's "might" is shown in His "wisdom;" He alone can *teach*; yet, because He, as a sovereign, explains not all His dealings, forsooth Job must presume to *teach to Him* (Isaiah, 40. 13, 14; Romans, II. 34; I Corinthians, 2. 16). So the transition to *v.* 23 is natural. UMBREIT with LXX. *translates*, "Who is *Lord*:" wrong, as this meaning belongs to later Hebrew. 23. Job dared to *prescribe* to God, what He should do (ch. 34. 10, 13). 24. Instead of arraigning, let it be thy fixed principle to *magnify* God in His works (Psalm III. 2-8; Revelation, 15. 3): these, which all may "see," may convince us, that what we do not see is altogether wise and good (Romans, I. 20). **behold**—As "see," *v.* 25 shows; not, as MAURER, "sing," loud (Note, 33. 27). 25. "See," *viz.*, with wondering admiration. [MAURER.] **man may behold**—Rather, "(yet) *mortals* (a different Hebrew word from "man") behold it (only) from afar off;" see but a small "part" (ch. 26. 14). 26. (ch. 37. 13. God's greatness in heaven and earth: a reason why Job should bow under his afflicting hand. 26. **know him not**—Only in part (*v.* 25; I Corinthians, 13. 12). **his years**—(Psalm 90. 2; 102. 24, 27); applied to Jesus Christ (Hebrews, I. 12). 27, 28. The marvellous formation of rain so ch. 5. 9, 10. **maketh small**—Rather, "He *draweth* (up) to Him, He *attracts* from the earth (below) the drops of water; they (the drops of water) pour down rain, (*which is*) His vapour." "Vapour" is in apposition with "rain," marking the way in which rain is formed, *viz.*, from the vapour drawn up by God into the air and then condensed into drops, which fall (Psalm 147. 8). The suspension of such a mass of water, and its descent, not in a deluge, but in *drops of vapoury rain*, are the marvel. The selection of this particular illustration of God's greatness forms a fit prelude to the storm in which God appears (ch. 40. 1). 28. **abundantly**—*Lit.*, upon many men. 29. ch. 37. 5. God's marvels in thunder and lightnings. 29. **spreadings, etc.**—The canopy of thick clouds, which covers the heavens in a storm (Psalm 105. 39). **the noise (crashing) of his tabernacle**—*viz.*, *thunder*; God being poetically said to have *His pavillion* amidst dark clouds (Psalm 18. 11; Isa. 40. 22). 30. **light**—Lightning. **it**—His tabernacle. The light, in an instant spread over the vast mass of dark clouds, forms a striking picture. "Spread" is repeated from *v.* 29, to form an antithesis, "He spreads not only *clouds*, but *light*." **covereth the bottom (roots) of the sea**—*viz.*, *with the light*. In the storm the depths of ocean are laid bare; and the light "covers" them, at the same moment that it "spreads" across the dark sky. So in Psalm 18. 14, 15, the discovering of "the channels of waters" follows the "lightnings." UMBREIT *translates*, "He spreadeth His light upon Himself, and covereth Himself with the roots of the sea;" (Psalm 104. 2); God's garment is woven of celestial light and of the watery-depths, raised to the sky to form His cloudy canopy. The phrase "cover himself with the root of the sea" is harsh: but the image is grand. 31. These (rain and lightnings) are marvellous and *not* to be *understood*, (*v.* 29), yet necessary; "For by

them he judgeth (chastiseth on the one hand) etc., (and on the other, by them) He giveth meat" (food), etc., (ch. 37. 13 38. 23, 27; Acts, 14. 17). 32. Rather, "He covereth (both) *His hands* with light (*lightning*, ch. 37. 3, *Margin*, and giveth it a command *against his adversary*" (*lit.*, the one *assailing* Him: Psalm 8. 2; 139. 20; 21. 10). Thus, as in v. 31, the twofold effect of His *waters* are set forth, so here, of His *light*; in the one hand *destructive lightning* against the wicked; in the other, *the genial light* for good to His friends, etc., v. 33. [UMBREIT.] 33. **noise**—Rather, He revealeth it (*lit.*, *announceth concerning it*) to His friend (antithesis to *adversary*, v. 32, so the *Hebrew* is translated, ch. 2. 11); also to cattle and plants (*lit.*, *that which shooteth up*; Genesis, 40. 10; 41. 22). As the general effect of "water" in the growth of food, is mentioned v. 31, so here that of "light" in cherishing *cattle and plants*. [UMBREIT.] If *English Version*, "noise" be retained, *translate*, "His noise (thunder) announces concerning Him (His coming in the tempest), the cattle (to announce) concerning Him when He is in the act of *rising up*" (in the storm). Some animals give various intimations, that they are sensible of the approach of a storm. (Virg. Georg. I. 373, etc.)

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

**Ver. 1-24.** 1. **At this**—When I hear the thundering of the Divine Majesty. Perhaps the storm already had begun, out of which God was to address Job (ch. 38. 1). 2. **hear attentively**—The *thunder*, ("noise"), etc., and then you will feel that there is good reason to trembling. **sound**—*Muttering* of the thunder. 3. **directeth it**—However zig-zag the *lightning's* course; or, rather, it applies to the peeling roll of the *thunder*. God's *all-embracing* power. **ends**—*Lit.*, *wings, skirts*, the habitable earth being often compared to an extended garment (ch. 38. 13; Isaiah, 11. 12). 4. The thunder-clap follows at an interval after the flash. **stay them**—He will not *hold back the lightnings* (v. 3), when the thunder is heard. [MAURER.] Rather, take "them" as the usual concomitants of thunder, viz., *rain and hail* [UMBREIT], (ch. 40. 9). 5. (ch. 36. 26; Psalm 65. 6; 139. 14). The sublimity of the description lies in this, that God is everywhere in the storm, directing it whither He will. [BARNES.] See Psalm 29, where, as here, the "voice" of God is repeated with grand effect. The thunder in Arabia is sublimely terrible. 6. **be**—More forcible than "Fall," as UMBREIT translates Genesis, 1. 3. **to the small rain, etc.**—He saith, Be on the earth. The shower increasing from "small" to "great," is expressed by the *plural showers* (*Margin*) following the *singular shower*. Winter rain (Song of Solomon, 2. 11). 7. In winter God stops man's out-of-doors activity. **sealeth**—Closeth up (ch. 9. 5). Man's "hands" are then tied up. **his work**—In antithesis to *man's own work* ("hand") which at other times engages men so as to be liable to forget their dependence on God. UMBREIT more *lit. translates*, That all men *whom He has made* (*lit.*, *of His making*) may be brought to acknowledgement. 8. **remain**—Rest in their lairs. It is beautifully ordered that during the cold, when they could not obtain food, many lie torpid;

a state wherein they need no food. The desolation of the fields, at God's bidding, is poetically graphic. 9. **south**—*Lit., chambers*; connected with the South (ch. 9. 9). The whirlwinds are poetically regarded as pent up by God in His Southern chambers, whence He sends them forth (so ch. 38. 22; Psalm 135. 7). As to the Southern whirlwinds (see Isaiah, 21. 1; Zechariah, 9. 14), they drive before them burning sands; chiefly from February to May. **the north**—*Lit., scattering*; the North wind *scatters* the clouds. 10. **frost**—Rather, *ice*. **the breath of God**—Poetically, for the ice-producing North wind. **straitened**—Physically accurate: frost *compresses* or *contracts* the expanded liquid into a congealed mass (ch. 38. 29, 30; Psalm 147. 17, 18). 11-13. How the thunder-clouds are dispersed, or else employed by God, either for correction or mercy. **by watering**—By loading it with water. **wearieth**—*Burdeneth* it, so that it falls in rain; thus “wearieth” answers to the parallel “scattereth” (cf. Note v. 9); a clear sky resulting alike from both. **bright cloud**—*Lit., cloud of His light i.e., of His lightning*. UMBREIT for “watering,” etc., translates, “Brightness drives away the clouds, His light scattereth the thick clouds:” the parallelism is thus good, but the Hebrew hardly sanctions it. 12. **it**—The cloud of lightning. **counsels**—Guidance (Psalm 148. 8); *lit., steering*; the clouds obey God's guidance, as the ship does the *helmsman*. So the lightning (Note, 36. 31, 32); neither is hap-hazard in its movements. **they**—*The clouds*, implied in the collective *singular* “it.” **the face of the world, etc.**—In the face of the earth's circle. 13. *Lit., He maketh it* (the rain-cloud) *find place*, whether for correction, if (it be destined) for His land, (*i.e., for the part inhabited by man, with whom God deals, as opposed to the parts uninhabited*), on which rain is at other times appointed to fall (ch. 38. 26, 27), or for mercy. “If it be destined for His land” is a parenthetical supposition. [MAURER.] In *English Version*, this clause spoils the even balance of the antithesis between the “rod” (*Margin*), and “mercy” (Psalm 68. 9; Genesis, 7.). 14. (Psalm 111. 2). 15. **when**—Rather, *how*. **disposed them**—*Lays His charge on these* “wonders” (v. 14), to arise. **light**—Lightning. **shine**—Flash. How is it that *light* arises from the *dark* thunder-cloud? 16. Hebrew, “*Hast thou understanding of the balancings,*” etc., how the clouds are poised in the air, so that their watery gravity does not bring them to the earth? The condensed moisture, descending by gravity, meets a warmer temperature, which dissipates it into vapour (the tendency of which is to ascend) and so counteracts the descending force. **perfect in knowledge**—God: not here in the sense that Elihu uses it of himself (ch. 36. 4). 17. **dost thou know**—How, etc. **thy garments**—*i.e., how thy body grows warm, so as to effect thy garments with heat?* **south wind**—*Lit., region of the South*. “When He *maketh still* (and sultry) the earth (*i.e., the atmosphere*) by (during) the South wind (Song of Solomon, 4. 16). 18. **with him**—Like as He does (ch. 40. 15). **spread out**—Given expanse to. **strong**—Firm; whence the term “firmament” (Genesis, 1. 6; *Margin, expansion*, Isaiah, 24. 24). **molten looking-glass**—Image of the bright, smiling sky. *Mirrors* were then formed of molten polished metal, not “glass.” 19. Men cannot explain God's wonders; we ought, therefore to be **dumb** and not contend with God. If Job thinks we ought, “let him

teach us, what we shall say." **order** — Frame. **darkness** — Of mind: ignorance. "The eyes are bewilderingly blinded, when turned in bold controversy with God towards the sunny heavens" (v. 18). [UMBREIT.] 20. What I, a mortal, say against God's dealings is not worthy of being told HIM. In opposition to Job's wish to "speak" before God (ch. 13. 3, 13-22). **if...surely he shall be swallowed up** — The parallelism more favors UMBREIT, "Durst a man speak (before Him, complaining) *that he is* (without cause) *being destroyed?*" 21. "Cleanseth," *i.e.*, *cleareth* the air of clouds. When the "bright light" of the sun, previously "not seen" through "clouds," suddenly shines out from behind them, owing to the "wind clearing them away," the effect is dazzling to the eye; so if God's majesty, now hidden, were suddenly revealed in all its brightness, it would spread "darkness" over Job's eyes, anxious as he is for it (cf. Note, v. 19). [UMBREIT.] It is because "now man sees not the bright sunlight" (God's dazzling Majesty), owing to the intervening "clouds" (ch. 26. 9), that they dare to wish to "speak" before God (v. 20). Prelude to God's appearance (ch. 38. 1). The words also hold true in a sense not intended by Elihu, but perhaps included by the Holy Ghost. Job and other suffers cannot see the *light* of God's countenance through the *clouds* of trial: but the wind will soon clear them off, and God shall appear again: let them but wait patiently for He still shines, though for a time they see Him not (see Note 23). 22. Rather, *golden splendour*. MAURER translates *gold*. It is found in Northern regions. But God cannot be "found out," because of His "Majesty" (v. 23). Thus ch. 28. corresponds; *English Version* is simpler. **the north** — *Brightness* is chiefly associated with it (Note, 23. 9). Here, perhaps, because the North wind clears the air (Proverbs, 25. 23). Thus this clause answers to the last of v. 21; as the second of this v. to the first of v. 21. Inverted parallelism. (See Isaiah, 14. 13; Psalm 48. 2). **with God** — Rather, *upon God*, as a garment (Psalm 104. 1, 2). **majesty** — *Splendour*. 23. **afflict** — Oppressively, so as to "pervert *judgment*" as Job implied (Note, 8. 3); but see end of Note 21, above. The reading "He answereth not," *i.e.*, gives no account of His dealings, is like a transcriber's correction, from ch. 33. 13; *Margin*. 24. **do** — Rather, *ought*. **wise** — In their own conceits.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

**Ver. 1-41.** 1. Jehovah appears unexpectedly in a whirlwind (already gathering, ch. 37. 1, 2), the symbol of "judgment" (Psalm 50. 3, 4, etc.), to which Job had challenged him. He asks him now to get himself ready for the contest. Can he explain the phenomena of God's *natural* government? How can he, then, hope to understand the principles of His *moral* government? God thus confirms Elihu's sentiment, that *submission to*, not *reasonings on*, God's ways is man's part. This and the *disciplinary* design of trial to the godly is the great lesson of this book. He does not solve the difficulty by reference to future retribution: for this was not the immediate question: *glimpses* of that truth were already given, in chs. 14. and 19., the *full revelation* of it being re-

served for Gospel time: Yet even *now* we need to learn the lesson taught by Elihu and God in Job. 2. **this** — Job. **counsel** — Impugning my divine *wisdom* in the providential arrangements of the universe. Such "words" (including those of the friends) rather *obscure*, can throw light on my ways. God is about to be Job's Vindicator, but must first bring him to a *right state of mind* for receiving relief. 3. **a man** — *Hero*, ready for battle (I Corinthians, 16. 13), as he had wished (ch. 9. 35; 13. 22; 31. 37). The robe, usually worn flowing, was girt up by a girdle, when men ran, laboured, or fought (I Peter, 1. 13). 4. To understand the cause of things, man should have been present at their origin. The finite creature cannot fathom the infinite wisdom of the Creator (ch. 28. 12; 15. 7, 8). **hast** (knowest) **understanding** — (Proverbs, 4. 1). 5. **measures** — Of its proportions. Image from an architect's plans of a building. **line** — of measurement (Isaiah, 28. 17). The earth is formed on an all-wise *plan*. 6. **foundations** — Not *sockets*, as *Margin*. **fastened** — *Lit., made to sink*, as a foundation-stone let down till it settles firmly in the clay (ch. 26. 7). Gravitation makes and keeps the earth a sphere. 7. So at the founding of Zerubbabel's temple (Ezra, 3. 10-13). So hereafter at the completion of the Church, the temple of the Holy Ghost (Zechariah, 4. 7); as at its foundation (Luke, 2. 13, 14). 7. **morning stars** — Especially beautiful. The creation-*morn* is appropriately associated with these, it being the *commencement* of this world's-*day*. The stars are *fig.* said to sing God's praises, as in Psalm 19. 1; 148. 3. They are symbols of the angels, bearing the same relation to our earth, as angels do to us. Therefore they answer to "sons of God," or angels, in the parallel. See Note 25. 5. 8. **doors** — Flood-gates; these when opened caused the flood (Genesis, 8. 2); or else, *the shores*. **womb** — of Chaos. The bowels of the earth. Image from child-birth (*v.* 8, 9; Ezekiel, 32. 2; Micah, 4. 10). Ocean at its birth was wrapped in clouds as its swaddling bands. 10. **brake up for** — *i.e.*, appointed it. Shores are generally *broken* and abrupt cliffs. The Greek for *shore* means a *broken* place. *I broke off* or measured off for it *my limit, i.e.*, the limit which I thought fit (ch. 26. 10). 11. **stayed** — *Hebrew, alimit shall be set to*. 12-15. Passing from creation to phenomena in the existing inanimate world. 12. **hast thou** — As God daily does. **commanded the morning** — To rise. **since thy days** — Since thou hast come into being. **its place** — It varies in its place of rising from day to day, and yet has its place each day according to fixed laws. 13. **take hold of the ends, etc.** — Spread itself over the *earth to its utmost bounds* in a moment. **wicked** — Who hate the light, and do their evil works in the dark (ch. 24. 13). **shaken out of it** — The corners (*Hebrew, wings or skirts*) of it, as of a garment, are taken hold of by the day-spring, so as to shake off the wicked. 24. Explaining the first clause of *v.* 13, as *v.* 15 does the second clause. As the plastic clay presents the various figures impressed on it by a seal, so the earth, which in the dark was void of all form, when illuminated by the day-spring, presents a variety of forms, hills, valleys, etc. "Turned" ("turns itself," *Hebrew*), alludes to the rolling cylinder seal, such as is found in Babylon, which leaves its impression on the clay, as it is *turned about*: so the morning light *rolling on over* the earth. **they stand** — *The forms of beauty*, unfolded by the dawn, stand forth as a garment, in

which the earth is clad. 15. **their light** — by which *they* work, viz., *darkness*, which is *their day* (ch. 24. 17), is extinguished by daylight. **high** — Rather, *The arm uplifted* for murder or other crime is broken; it falls down suddenly, powerless, through their fear of light. 16. **springs** — Fountains beneath the sea (Psalm 95. 4, 5). **search** — Rather, *the inmost recesses, lit., that which is only found by searching*. the deep caverns of the ocean. 17. **seen** — The second clause heightens the thought in the first. Man during life does not even “see” the gates of the realm of the dead (“death,” ch. 10. 21), much less are they “opened” to him. But those are “naked before God” (ch. 26. 6). 18. **hast thou** — As God doth (ch. 28. 24). 19-38. The marvels in heaven. 19. “What is the way (to the place wherein) light dwelleth?” The origin of light and darkness. In Genesis, 1., “light” is created distinct from, and previous to, light-emitting bodies, the luminaries of heaven. 20. Dost thou know its place so well, as to be able to *guide* (“take” as in Isaiah, 13. 17) it to (but UMBREIT, “reach it in”) its own boundary, i.e., the limit between light and darkness (ch. 26. 10). 21. Or without the interrogation, in an ironical sense. [UMBREIT.] **then** — When I created light and darkness (ch. 15. 7). 22. **treasures** — *Storehouses*, from which God draws forth snow and hail. Snow is vapour congealed in the air, before it is collected in drops large enough to form hail. Its shape is that of a crystal in endless variety of beautiful figures. Hail is formed by rain falling through dry cold air. 23. **against the time of trouble** — The time when I design to chastise men (Exodus, 9. 18; Joshua, 10. 11; Revelations, 16. 21; Isaiah, 28. 17; Psalm 18. 12, 13; Haggai, 2. 17). 24. **is...parted** — Parts, so as to diffuse itself over the whole earth, though seeming to come from one point. Light travels from the sun to the earth, ninety millions of miles in eight minutes. **which scattereth** — Rather, “And by what way the East wind (personified) spreads (scattereth) itself,” etc. The light and East wind are associated together, as both come from one quarter, and often arise together (Jonah, 4. 8). 25. **waters** — *Rain* falls, not in a mass on one spot, but in countless separate canals in the air marked out for them. **way for the lightning** — (ch. 28. 26). 26. Since rain falls also on places uninhabited by man, it cannot be that *man* guides its course. Such rain, though man cannot explain the reason for it, is not lost. *God* has some wise design in it. 27. As though the desolate ground thirsted for God’s showers. Personification. The beauty imparted to the uninhabited desert pleases God, for whom primarily all things exist, and He has ulterior designs in it. 28. Can any visible origin of rain and dew be assigned by man? Dew is moisture, which was suspended in the air, but becomes condensed in reaching the — in the night — lower temperature, of objects on the earth. 29. ch. 37. 10. 30. The unfrozen *waters are hid* under the frozen, as *with a covering of stone*. **frozen** — *Lit., is taken*: the particles *take hold* of one another so as to cohere. 31. **sweet influences** — The joy diffused by spring, the time when the Pleiades appear. The Eastern poets, Hafiz, Sadi, etc., describe them as “brilliant rosettes.” GESENIUS translates, “bands” or “knot,” which answers better the parallelism. But *English Version* agrees better with the *Hebrew*. The seven stars are closely “bound” together, Note, 9. 9. “Canst thou bind or loose the tie?” “Canst thou loose the bonds by



which the constellation Orion (represented in the East as an impious giant chained to the sky) is held fast." (Note, 9. 9). 32. *Canst thou bring forth* from their places or *houses* (Mazzaloth, *Margin*, 2 Kings, 23. 5; to which *Mazzaroth* here is equivalent) into the sky *the signs of the Zodiac at their respective seasons* — the twelve lodgings in which the sun successively stays, or appears, in the sky? **Arcturus** — Ursa Major. **his sons** — The three stars in its tail. Canst thou make them appear in the sky? (ch. 9. 9.) The great and less Bear are called by the Arabs "Daughters of the Bier," the quadrangle being the bier, the three others the mourners. 33. **ordinances** — Which regulate the alterations of seasons, etc. (Genesis, 8. 22). **dominion** — *Controlling influence* of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, etc., on the earth (on the tides, weather). (Genesis, 1. 16; Psalm 136. 7-9). 34. Jeremiah, 14. 22; above, ch. 22. 11, metaphorically. 35. **here we are** — At thy disposal (Isaiah, 6. 8). 36. **inward parts... heart** — But [UMBREIT], "dark clouds" ("shining phenomena," MAURER) — "meteor," referring to the consultation of these as signs of weather by the husbandman (Ecclesiastes, 11. 4). But *Hebrew* supports *English Version*. The connexion is, "Who hath given thee the intelligence to comprehend in any degree the phenomena just specified?" **heart** — Not the usual *Hebrew* word, but one from a root to *view*; *perception*. 37. Who appoints by his wisdom the due measure of the clouds? **stay** — Rather, *empty*; *lit.*, *lay down* or *incline* so as to *pour out*. "Bottles of heaven," rain-filled clouds. 38. **groweth, etc.** — Rather, *pour itself into a mass* by the rain, like molten metal; then *translate* 38, "Who is it that *empties*, etc., when," etc.? *English Version*, however, is tenable: "*Is caked into a mass*" by heat, like molten metal, *before* the rain falls; "Who is it that *can empty* the rain vessels, and bring down rain *at such a time?*" (v. 38.) 39. From this v. to ch. 39. 30, the instincts of animals. Is it thou that givest it the instinct to hunt its prey? (Psalm 104. 21.) **appetite** — *Lit.*, *life*: which depends on the *appetite* (ch. 33. 20). 40. **lie in wait** — for their prey (Psalm 10. 9). 41. Luke. 12. 24. Transition from the noble lioness to the croaking raven. Though man dislikes it, as of ill-omen, God cares for it, as for all His creatures.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

**Ver. 1-30.** Even wild beast, cut off from all care of *man*, are cared for by *God* at their seasons of greatest need. Their instinct comes direct from God, and guides them to help themselves in parturition; the very time when the herdsman is most anxious for his herds. **wild goats** — Ibex (Psalm 104. 18; 1 Samuel, 24. 2). **hinds** — fawns: most timid and defenceless animals, yet cared for by God. 2. They bring forth with ease and do not need to reckon the months of pregnancy, as the shepherd does in the case of his flocks. 3. "Bow themselves" in parturition: bend on their knees (1 Samuel, 4. 19). **bring forth** — *Lit.*, *cause their young to cleave the womb and bring forth*. **sorrows** — Their young ones, the cause of their momentary pains. 4. **are in good liking** — In good condition, grow up strong. **with corn** — Rather, *in the*

field, without man's care. **return not**—Being able to provide for themselves. 5. **wild ass**—Two different Hebrew words are here used for the same animal, *the ass of the woods* and *the wild ass*. (Note, 6. 5; ch. 11. 82; 24. 5; Jeremiah, 2. 24.) **loosed the bands**—Given its liberty to. Man can rob animals of freedom, but not, as God, give freedom, combined with subordination to fixed laws. 6. **barren**—*Lit., salt, i.e., unfruitful*. (So *Margin*, Psalm 107. 34.) 7. **multitude**—Rather, *din*: he sets it at defiance, being far away from it in the freedom of the wilderness. **driver**—who urges on the tame ass to work. The wild ass is the symbol of uncontrolled freedom in the East; even kings have, therefore, added its name to them. 8. **the range**—*Lit., searching*, “that which it finds by searching is,” etc. 9. **unicorn**—Pliny, *Natural History*, 8. 21, mentions such an animal: its figure is found depicted in the ruins of Persepolis. The Hebrew *reem* conveys the idea of *loftiness* and *power*, cf. *Ramah*, Indian *Ram*, Latin *Roma*. The rhinoceros was perhaps the original type of the unicorn. The Arab *rim* is a two-horned animal. Sometimes “unicorn” or *reem* is a mere *poetical symbol* or abstraction. But the *buffalo* is the animal referred to here, from the contrast to *the tame ox*, used in ploughing, etc., v. 10, 12. **crib**—(Isaiah, 1. 3). **abide**—*Lit., pass the night*. 10. **his band**—fastened to the horns, as its chief strength lies in the head and shoulders. **after thee**—Obedient to thee: willing to follow, instead of being goaded on *before* thee. 11. **thy labour**—Rustic work. 12. **believe**—Trust. **seed**—Produce (1 Samuel, 8. 16). **into thy barn**—Rather, *gather* (the contents of) *thy threshing floor* [MAURER]; the corn threshed on it. 13. Rather, “the wing of the *ostrich* hen—(*lit., the crying-bird*; as the Arab name for it means *song*: referring to its night-cries, ch. 30. 29; Micah, 1. 8, vibrates joyously). It is not like the quill and feathers of the *pious bird* (the stork?) [UMBREIT.] The *vibrating, quivering wing*, serving for sail and oar at once, is characteristic of the ostrich in full course. Its white and black feathers in the wing and tail are like the stork's. But unlike that bird, the symbol of parental love in the East, it, with seeming want of natural (pious) affection, deserts its young. Both birds are poetically called by descriptive, instead of their usual appellative names. 14. **Yet** (unlike the stork) she leaveth, etc. Hence called by the Arabs *the impious bird*. However, the fact is, she lays her eggs with great care and hatches them, as other birds do; but in hot countries the eggs do not need so constant incubation: she therefore often leaves them; and sometimes forgets the place on her return: moreover the outer eggs, intended for food, she feeds her young with; these eggs lying separate in the sand, exposed to the sun gave rise to the idea of her altogether leaving them. God describes her as she *seems to man*; implying, though she may seem foolishly to neglect her young, yet really she is guided by a sure instinct from God, as much as animals of instincts widely different. 16. On a slight noise often she forsakes her eggs, and returns not, *as if* she were “hardened towards her young.” **her labour**—in producing eggs, *is in vain*, (yet) *she has no disquietude* (about her young): unlike other birds, who, if one egg and another are taken away, will go on laying till their full number is made up. 17. **wisdom**—Such as God gives to other animals, and to man (ch. 35. 11). The Arab proverb is, “foolish as an ostrich.”



Byblos, Syria.



Ephesus.



Tigranes, King of Syria.



Antoninus. Isthmus.



Ptolemy VI. Philopator.



Antiochus Philadelphus.



Shekel of Barkobab. Silver, 50 cents.

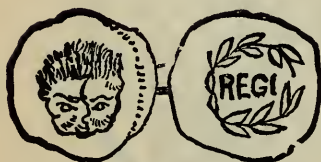


Antiochus Epiphanes.



Ptolemy I. Arsinoe.

Ptolemy I. Berenice



Regium.



Antoninus of Philadelphia.



Coin of Macrinus.  
Byblos.



Syria.

Yet her very seeming want of wisdom is not without wise design of God, though man cannot see it: just as in the trials of the godly, which seem so unreasonable to Job, there lies hid a wise design. 18. Notwithstanding her deficiencies, she has distinguishing excellencies. **lifteth . . . herself**—for running: she cannot mount in the air. GESENIUS translates, *lashes herself* up to her course by flapping her wings. The old versions favour *English Version*, and the parallel “scorneth” answers to her *proudly* “lifting up herself.” 19. The allusion to “the horse,” v. 18, suggests the description of him. Arab poets delight in praising the horse; yet it is not mentioned in the possessions of Job (chs. 1. and 42.). It seems to have been at the time chiefly used for war, rather than “domestic purposes.” **thunder**—Poetically for, “he with arched neck inspires fear as *thunder* does.” Translate, “Majesty.” [UMBREIT.] Rather, “the trembling, *quivering mane*,” answering to the “vibrating wing” of the ostrich (Note 13). [MAURER.] *Mane* in Greek also is from a root meaning *fear*. *English Version* is more sublime. 20. **make . . . afraid**—Rather, “canst thou (as I do) make him *spring* as the *locust*.” So in Joel, 2. 4, the comparison is between *locusts* and *war horses*. The heads of the two are so like, that the Italians call the locusts *cavaletta*, “little horse.” **nostrils**—Snorting furiously. 21. **valley**—Where the battle is joined. **goeth on**—Goeth forth. (Numbers, 1. 3; 21. 23). 23. **quiver**—for *the arrows*, which they contain, and which are directed “*against him*.” **glittering spear**—*lit., glittering of the spear*, like “lightning of the spear” (Habakkuk, 3. 11). **shield**—Rather, *lance*. 24. **swalloweth**—Fretting with impatience, he *draws the ground towards him* with his hoof, as if he would *swallow* it. The parallelism shows this to be the sense: not as MAURER, “scours over it.” **neither believeth**—For joy. Rather, “he will not *stand still*, when the note of the trumpet” (soundeth). 25. **saith**—Poetically applied to his mettlesome neighing, whereby he shows his love of the battle. **smelleth**—Snuffeth: discerneth (*Margin*, Isaiah, 11. 3). **thunder**—Thundering voice. 26. The instinct by which some birds migrate to warmer climes before winter. Rapid *fly-ing* peculiarly characterizes the whole hawk *genus*. 27. **eagle**—It flies highest of all birds: thence called *the bird of heaven*. 28. **abideth**—Securely (Psalm 91. 1); it occupies the *same abode* mostly for life. **crag**—*lit., tooth* (*Margin*, 1 Samuel, 14. 5). **strong place**—Citadel, fastness. 29. **seeketh**—Is on the look out for. **behold**—The eagle descries its prey at an astonishing distance, by sight, rather than smell. 30. Quoted partly by Jesus Christ (Matthew, 24. 28). The food of young eagles is the blood of victims brought by the parent, when they are still too feeble to devour flesh. **slain**—as *the vulture* chiefly feeds on carcasses, *it* is included probably in the *genus eagle*.

## CHAPTER XL.

**Ver. 1-24.** GOD'S SECOND ADDRESS. He had paused for a reply, but Job was silent. 1. **the Lord**—*Hebrew*, JEHOVAH. 2. **he that contendeth**—As Job had so often expressed a wish to do. Or, *rebuketh*. Does Job now still (after seeing and hearing of God's majesty

and wisdom) wish to set God right? **answer it** — viz., the questions I have asked. 3. **Lord** — JEHOVAH. 4. I am (too) vile (to reply). It is a very different thing to vindicate ourselves before God, from what it is before men. Job could do the latter, not the former. **lay...hand upon...mouth** — I have no plea to offer (ch. 21. 5; Judges, 18. 19). 5. **once...twice** — *Oftentimes, more than once* (ch. 33. 14, cf. with 29; Psalm 62. 11): "I have spoken," viz., against God. **not answer** — Not plead against thee. 6. **the Lord** — JEHOVAH. 7. (Note, 38. 3). Since Job has not only spoken against God, but accused Him of injustice, God challenges him to try, could *he* govern the world, as *God* by His power doth, and punish the proud and wicked (*v.* 7-14). 8. Wilt thou not only contend with, but *set aside my judgment* or justice in the government of the world. **condemn** — Declare me unrighteous, in order that *thou mayest be* accounted *righteous* (innocent; undeservingly-afflicted). 9. **arm** — God's omnipotence (Isaiah, 53. 1). **thunder** — God's voice (ch. 37. 4). 10. See hast thou power and majesty like God's, to enable thee to judge and govern the world. 11. **rage** — Rather, pour out *the redundant floods of*, etc. **behold** — Try, canst thou, as God, by a mere *glance* abase the proud (Isaiah, 2. 12, etc.). 12. **proud** — high (Daniel, 4. 37). **in this place** — On the spot: suddenly, before they can move from their place (Note, 34. 26; 36. 20). 13. (Isaiah, 2. 10). *Abase* and remove them out of the sight of men. **bind...faces** — *i.e.*, *Shut up* their *persons*. [MAURER.] But it refers rather to the custom of *binding* a cloth over the *faces* of persons about to be executed (ch. 9. 24; Esther, 7. 8). **in secret** — Consign them to *darkness*. 14. **confess** — Rather, *extol*: "I also," who now *censure* thee. But since thou canst not do these works, thou must, instead of censuring, extol *my* government. **thine own...hand...save** — (Psalm 44. 3). So as to eternal salvation by Jesus Christ (Isaiah, 59. 16; 63. 5). 15-24. God shows that if Job cannot bring under control the lower animals (of which he selects the two most striking, Behemoth on land, Leviathan in the water), much less is he capable of governing the world. 15. **behemoth** — The description in part agrees with the hippopotamus, in part with the elephant, but exactly in all details with neither. It is rather a *poetical personification of the great Pachydermata, or Herbivora* (so "he eateth grass," etc), the idea of the hippopotamus being predominant. In *v.* 17, "the tail like a cedar," hardly applies to the latter (so also *v.* 20; 26, "Jordan," a river which elephants alone could reach, but see Note 23). On the other hand, 21, 22 are characteristic of the *amphibious* river-horse. So leviathan (the twisting animal), ch. 41. 1, is a *generalized term for cetacea, pythons, saurians*, of the neighbouring seas and rivers, including the crocodile which is the most prominent, and is often associated with the river-horse by old writers. "Behemoth" seems to be the Egyptian *Pehemout*, "water-ox," Hebraized, so called as being like an ox, whence the Italian "bomarino." **with tree** — As I made thyself. Yet how great the difference! The *manifola* wisdom and power of God! **he eateth grass** — Marvellous in an animal living so much in the water: also strange, that such a monster should not be carnivorous. 16. **naval** — Rather, *muscles* of his belly; the weakest point of the elephant, therefore *it* is not meant. 17. **like a cedar** — As *the tempest bends* the cedar, so it can move its smooth, thick tail. [UM.

BREIT.] But the cedar implies straightness and length, such as do not apply to the river-horse's short tail, but perhaps to an extinct species of animal see Note v. 15. **stones** — *thighs. wrapped* — Firmly *twisted together*, like a thick rope. 18. **strong pieces** — Rather, *tubes* of copper. [UMBREIT.] 19. Chief of the *works* of God: so "ways" (ch. 26. 14; Proverbs, 8. 22). **can make his sword to approach** — Rather, *has furnished him with his sword*, (harpe), viz., the *sickle-like* teeth with which he cuts down grain. *English Version*, however, is *lit.* right. 20. The mountain is not his *usual* haunt. BOCHART says it is *sometimes* found there. (?) **beasts...play** — A graphic trait: though armed with such teeth, he lets the beasts play near him unhurt, for his food is grass. 21. **lieth** — He leads an inactive life. **shady trees** — Rather, *lotus-bushes*; as v. 22 requires. 22. *Translate, lotus-bushes.* 23. Rather, "(Though) a river be violent (overflow), he trembleth not;" (for though living on land, he can live in the water too), he is secure, though a Jordan swell up to his mouth." "Jordan" is used for *any great river*; consonant with the "behemoth" being a *poetical generalization* (Note 15). The author cannot have been a Hebrew as UMBREIT asserts, or he would not adduce the Jordan, where there were no river-horses. He alludes to it as a name for *any* river, but not as one known to him, except by hearsay. 24. Rather, "will any take him by open force (*lit., before his eyes*), or pierce his nose with cords?" No: he can only be taken by guile, and in a pitfall (ch. 41. 1, 2).

## CHAPTER XLI.

**Ver. 1-34.** 1. **leviathan** — *Lit., the twisted animal*, gathering itself in folds: a synonyme to the Thannin (ch. 3. 8, *Margin*; see Psalm 74. 14; type of the Egyptian tyrant; Psalm 104. 26; Isaiah, 27. 1; the Babylon tyrant). *A poetical generalization* for all cetacean, serpentine and saurian monsters (Note 40. 15; hence *all* the description applies to no *one* animal); especially the crocodile: which is naturally described after the *river-horse*, as both are found in the Nile. **tongue...lettest down** — The crocodile has no tongue, or a very small one cleaving to the lower jaw. But as in fishing the *tongue of the fish* draws the baited hook to it, God asks, Canst thou in like manner take leviathan? 2. **hook** — Rather, *a rope of rushes*. **thorn** — Rather, *a ring or hook*. So wild beasts were led about when caught (Isaiah, 37. 29; Ezekiel, 29. 4); fishes also were secured thus, and thrown into the water, to keep them alive. 3. **soft words** — That thou mayest spare his life. No: he is untamable. 4. Can he be tamed for domestic use? (so ch. 39. 10-12). 5. **a bird** — That is tamed. 6. Rather, *partners* (viz., *in fishing*). **make a banquet** — The parallelism rather supports UMBREIT, "Do partners (in trade) *desire to purchase* him? so the *Hebrew*, (Deuteronomy, 2. 6). **merchants** — *Lit., Canaanites*, who were great merchants (Hosea, 12. 7, *Margin*). His hide is not penetrable, as that of fishes. 8. If thou *lay*, etc., thou wilt have reason ever to *remember*, etc., and thou wilt never try it again. 9. **the hope** — *Of taking him*. **cast down** — With fear "at the (mere) sight of him." 10. **fierce** — Cour-

ageous. If a man *dare* attack one of my creatures (Genesis, 49. 9; Numbers, 24. 9), who will dare (as Job had wished) oppose himself (Psalm 2. 2) to me, the Creator? This is the main drift of the description of Leviathan. 11. **prevented** — Done me a favour first: anticipated me with service (Psalm 21. 3). None can call me to account ("stand before me," *v.* 10) as unjust, because I have withdrawn favours from him (as in Job's case); for none has laid me under a prior obligation by conferring on me something which was not already my own. What can man give to Him, who possesses all, including man himself? Man cannot constrain the creature to be his "servant," (*v.* 4) much less the Creator. 12. **I will not conceal** — A resumption of the description broken off by the digression, which formed an agreeable change. **his power** — *Lit., the way, i.e., true proportion or expression of his strength* (so *Hebrew*, Deuteronomy, 19. 4). **comely proportion** — *Lit., the comeliness of his structure* (his *apparatus*: so "suit of apparel," Judges, 17. 10). [MAURER.] UMBREIT translates, "his armour." But that follows after. 13. **discover** — Rather, *uncover the surface* of his garment (*skin*, ch. 10. 11): strip off the hard *outer coat* with which the inner skin is covered. **with** — Rather, *within* his double jaws, *lit., bridle*: hence that into which the bridle is put, *double row of teeth*; but "bridle" is used to imply that none dare put his hand in to insert a bridle where in other animals it is placed (*v.* 4; ch. 39. 10). 14. **doors of . . . face** — His mouth. His teeth are sixty in number, larger in proportion than his body, some standing out, some serrated, fitting into each other like a comb. [BOCHART.] 15. Rather, his *furrows of shields* (as "tubes," "channels," Note 40. 18) are, etc., *i.e., the rows of scales*, like *shields* covering him: he has seventeen such rows. **shut up** — Firmly closed together. A musket ball cannot penetrate him, save in the eye, throat, and belly. 18. *Translate*, "his sneezing causeth a light to shine." Amphibious animals, emerging after having long held their breath under water, respire by violently expelling the breath like one sneezing: in the effort the *eyes* which are usually directed towards the sun, seem to flash fire; or it is the expelled *breath* that, in the sun, seems to emit light. **eyelids of morning** — The Egyptian hieroglyphics paint the *eyes of the crocodile* as the symbol for *morning*, because the eyes appear the first thing, before the whole body emerges from the deep. [HOR. HIEROG., I. 65. BOCHART.] 19. **burning lamps** — *Torches*, viz., in respiring (*v.* 18) *seem* to go out. 20. **seething** — Boiling: *lit., blown under*, under which a fire is blown. 21. **kindleth coals** — Poetical imagery (Psalm 18. 8). 22. **remaineth** — Abideth permanently. His chief strength is in the neck. **sorrow** — Anxiety or dismay personified. **is turned into joy** — Rather, *danceth, exulteth*; wherever he goes, he spreads terror "before him." 23. **flakes** — Rather, dewlaps. That which *falls* down (*Margin.*) They are "joined" *fast and firm*, together, not *hanging loose*, as in the ox. **and firm** — UMBREIT and MAURER, "Are spread." **In themselves** — Rather, *upon him*. 24. **heart** — BOCHART, "In large beasts which are less acute in feeling, there is great firmness of the *heart*, and slower motion." [BOCHART.] The nether mill-stone, on which the upper turns, is especially hard. 23. **he** — The crocodile: a type of the awe which the Creator inspires, when He rises in wrath. **breakings** — viz., of the mind, *i.e., terror*. **purify themselves** — Rather, *they wander from*



*the way, i.e.,* flee away bewildered. [MAURER and UMBREIT.] 26. **cannot hold**—On his hard skin. **habergeon**—Coat of mail: *avail* must be taken by Zeugma out of "hold," as the verb in the second clause: "hold" cannot apply to the "coat of mail." 27. **iron... brass**—viz., weapons. 28. **arrow**—*Lit., son of the bow*; Oriental imagery (Lamentations, 3. 13, *Margin*). **stubble**—Arrows produce no more effect, than it would to throw stubble at him.. 29. **darts**—Rather, *clubs*; darts have been already mentioned. 30. **stones**—Rather, *pots-herds, i.e.,* the sharp and pointed scales on the belly, like broken pieces of pottery. **sharp pointed things**—Rather, *a threshing instrument*, but not on the *fruit* of the earth, but "on the *mire*;" irony. When he lies on the mire, he leaves the marks of his scales so imprinted on it, that one might fancy a threshing instrument with its sharp teeth had been drawn over it (Isaiah, 28. 27). 31. Whenever he moves. **sea**—The Nile (Isaiah, 19. 5; Nahum, 3. 8). **pot of ointment**—The vessel in which it is mixed. Appropriate to the crocodile, which emits a musky smell. 32. **path**—The foam on his track. **hoary**—As hair of the aged. 33. **who**—Being one who, etc. 34. **beholdeth**—As their superior. **children of pride**—The proud and fierce beasts. So ch. 28. 8; *Hebrew, sons of pride*. To humble the *pride* of man, and to teach implicit submission, is the aim of Jehovah's speech, and of the book: therefore with this as to leviathan, the type of God in His Lordship over creation, he closes.

## CHAPTER XLII.

**Ver. 1-6.** JOB'S PENITENT REPLY. 2. In the first clause he owns God to be omnipotent over nature, as contrasted with his own feebleness, which God had proved (ch. 40. 15; 41. 34); in the second, that God is supremely just (which, in order to be governor of the world, He must needs be,) in *all* His dealings, as contrasted with his own vileness (*v. 6*), and incompetence to deal with the wicked as a just judge (ch. 40. 8-14). **thought**—*Purpose*, as in ch. 17. 11; but it is usually applied to *evil devices* (ch. 21. 27; Psalm 10. 2); the ambiguous word is designedly chosen to express, that, whilst to Job's finite view, God's plans seem bad, to the All-wise One, they continue unhindered in their development, and will at last be seen to be as good as they are infinitely wise. No evil can emanate from the Parent of good (James, 1. 13, 17); but it is His prerogative to overrule evil to good. 3. I am the man! Job *in God's own words* (ch. 38. 2), expresses his deep and humble penitence. God's word concerning our guilt should be engraven on our hearts and form the ground-work of our confession. Most men in confessing sin palliate rather than confess. Job in omitting "by words" (ch. 38. 2), goes even further than God's accusation. Not merely my *words*, but my whole thoughts and ways were "without knowledge." **too wonderful**—I rashly denied that thou hast any fixed plan in governing human affairs, merely because thy plan was "too wonderful" for my comprehension. 4. When I said, "Hear," etc., Job's *demand* (ch. 13. 22), convicted him of being "without knowledge." God alone could speak thus to Job, not Job to God; therefore he quotes again God's words as the

ground-work of retracting his own foolish words. 5. **hearing of ear** — (Psalm 18. 44, *Margin*). *Hearing* and *Seeing* are often in antithesis (ch. 29. 11; Psalm 48. 8). **seeth** — not God's *face* (Exodus, 33. 20), but his presence in the veil of a dark cloud (ch. 38. 1). Job implies also that, besides this literal *seeing*, he now saw spiritually what he had indistinctly taken on hearsay before God's infinite wisdom. He "now" proves this; he had seen in a *literal* sense before, at the beginning of God's speech, but he had not seen *spiritually* till "now" at its close. 6. **myself** — Rather, "I abhor," and retract *the rash speeches* I made against thee, v. 3, 4, [UMBREIT.]

7-17. EPILOGUE, in prose. 7. **to Eliphaz** — Because he was the foremost of the three friends: their speeches were but the echo of his **right** — *Lit., well-grounded*, sure and true. Their spirit towards Job was unkindly, and to justify themselves in their unkindness they used false arguments (ch. 13. 7), (viz., that calamities always prove *peculiar* guilt); therefore, though it was "for God," they spake thus falsely. God "reproves" them, as Job said He would (ch. 13. 10). **like Job** — Job had spoken rightly in relation to *them* and their argument, denying their *theory*, and the *fact* which they alleged, that he was peculiarly guilty and a hypocrite; but wrongly in relation to *God*, when he fell into the opposite extreme of almost denying *all* guilt. This extreme *he* has now repented of, and therefore God speaks of him as now altogether "right." 8. **seven** — (See Introduction). The number offered by the Gentile prophet (Numbers, 23. 1). Job plainly lived before the legal priesthood, etc. The patriarchs acted as priests for their families; and sometimes as praying mediators (Genesis, 20. 17), thus foreshadowing the true Mediator (1 Timothy, 2. 5), but sacrifice accompanies, and is the ground-work, on which the mediation rests. **him** — Rather, "His *person* (face) only" (Note 22. 30). The "person" must be first accepted, before God can accept his offering and work (Genesis, 4. 4): *that* can be only through Jesus Christ. **folly** — Impiety (ch. 1. 22; 2. 10). 9. The forgiving spirit of Job foreshadows the love of Jesus Christ and of Christians to enemies (Matthew, 5. 44; Luke, 23. 34; Acts, 7. 60; 16. 24, 28, 30, 31). 10. **turned . . . captivity** — Proverbial for *restored or amply indemnified him for all he had lost* (Ezekiel, 16. 53; Psalm 14, 7; Hosea, 6. 11). Thus the future vindication of man, body and soul, against Satan (ch. 1. 9-12), at the resurrection (ch. 19. 25-27), has its earnest and adumbration in the temporal vindication of Job at last by Jehovah in person. **thrice** — So to the afflicted literal and spiritual Jerusalem (Isaiah, 40. 2; 60. 7; 61. 7; Zechariah, 9. 12). As in Job's case, so in that of Jesus Christ, the glorious recompense follows the "intercession" for enemies (Isaiah, 53. 12). 11. It was Job's complaint in his misery that his "brethren," etc., were "estranged" from him (ch. 19. 13); these now return with the return of his prosperity (Proverbs, 14. 20; 19. 6, 7): the true friend loveth at all times (Proverbs, 17. 17; 18. 24). "Swallow friends leave in the winter and return with the spring" (HENRY.) **eat bread** — in token of friendship (Psalm 41. 9). **piece of money** — Presents are usual in visiting a man of rank in the East, especially after a calamity (2 Chronicles, 32. 23). *Hebrew, Kesita*. MAGEE translates, *a lamb*, (the medium of exchange then, before money was used,) as it is in *Margin* of Genesis, 33. 19; Joshua, 24. 32. But it is

from the Arabic *Kasat*, "weighed out," [UMBREIT] not coined; so Genesis, 42. 35; 33. 19; cf. with Genesis, 23. 15, makes it likely it was equal to four shekels: *Hebrew Kashat*, "pure," viz., metal. The term, instead of the usual "shekel," etc., is a mark of antiquity. **ring**—whether for the nose or ear (Genesis, 35. 4; Isaiah, 3. 21). Much of the gold in the East, in the absence of banks, is in the shape of ornaments. 12. Probably by degrees, not all at once. 13. The same number as before; perhaps by a second wife: in ch. 19. 17, his wife is last mentioned. 14. Names significant of his restored prosperity (Genesis, 4. 25; 5. 29.) Jemima, *daylight*, after his "night" of calamity: but MAURER, a "dove." Kezia, *cassia*, an aromatic herb (Psalm 45. 8): instead of his offensive breath and ulcers. Keren-happuch, "horn of *stibium*," a paint with which females dyed their eye-lids; in contrast to his "horn defiled in the dust" (ch. 16. 15). The names also imply the beauty of his daughters. 15. **inheritance among...brethren**—An unusual favour in the East to daughters, who, in the Jewish law, only inherited if there were no sons (Numbers, 27. 8), a proof of wealth and unanimity. 16. LXX. make Job live 170 years after his calamity, and 240 in all. This would make him seventy at the time of his calamity, which added to 140 in *Hebrew* text make up 210; little more than the age (205) of Terah, father of Abraham, perhaps his contemporary. Man's length of life gradually shortened till it reached threescore and ten in Moses' time (Psalm 90. 10). 16. **sons' sons**—A proof of Divine favour (Genesis, 50. 23; Psalm 128. 6; Proverbs, 17. 6). 17. **full of days**—*Fully sated and contented* with all the happiness that life could give him: realizing what Eliphaz had painted as the lot of the godly (ch. 5. 26; Psalm 91. 16; Genesis, 25. 8; 35. 29). LXX. adds, "It is written, that he will rise again with those whom the Lord will raise up." Cf. Matthew. 27. 52, 53, from which it perhaps was derived spuriously.

# INTRODUCTION.

THE BOOK OF

## PSALMS.

THE Hebrew title of this *book* is [Tehilm] *Praises* or *Hymns*, for a leading feature in its contents is *praise*, though the word occurs in the title of only one Psalm (145). The Greek title (in the Septuagint, a translation made 200 years before Christ), is *Psalmoi*, whence our word *Psalms*. This corresponds to the Hebrew word *Mizmoi*, by which sixty-five Psalms are designated in their inscriptions, and which the Syriac, a language like the Hebrew, uses for the whole book. It means, as does also the Greek name, an ode, or song, whose singing is accompanied by an instrument, particularly the harp, cf. 1 Chr. 16. 4-8; 2 Chr. 5. 12, 13. To some Psalms, the Hebrew word (*Shir*) a song, is prefixed. Paul seems to allude to all these terms in Eph. 5. 19, "singing . . . in *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*."

TITLES.—To more than a hundred Psalms are prefixed inscriptions, which give one or more, (and in one case, 60th, all) of these particulars: the direction to the Musician, the name of the author, or the instrument, the style of the music or of the poetry, the subject or occasion. The authority of these inscriptions has been disputed by some writers. They say that the earliest translators, as the Greek and Syriac, evince a disregard for their authority, by variations from a proper translation of some, altering others, and, in several instances, supplying titles to Psalms which, in Hebrew, had none. It is also alleged, that the subject of a Psalm, as given in the title, is often inconsistent with its contents. But those translators have also varied from a right translation of many passages in the Bible, which all agree to be of good authority: and the alleged inconsistency may be shown, on more accurate investigation, not to exist. The admitted antiquity of these inscriptions, on the other hand, and even their obscurity, raise a presumption in their favour, while such prefaces to a composition accord with the usages of that age and part of the world, cf. Is. 38. 9.

"*The Chief Musician*" was the Superintendent of the Music, cf. 1 Chr. 15. 21, *Marg.* To prefixed to this, means, *pertaining to* in his official character. This inscription is found in 53 Psalms, and is attached to Habakkuk's prayer, Ha. 3. The same Hebrew preposition is prefixed to the name of the author, and translated *of*, "as a Psalm of David," "of Asaph," etc., except that to "the sons of Korah," it is translated *for*, which is evidently wrong, as the usual direction "to the chief Musician" is given, and no other authorship intimated.

AUTHORS.—This book is usually called "The Psalms of David," he being the only author mentioned in the N. T., Lu. 20. 42, and his name appearing in more titles than that of any other writer. Besides, about one-half of the Psalms in which it thus appears the 2nd and 95th are ascribed to him, Acts 4. 25, and Heb. 4. 7. He was probably the author of many others which appear without a name. He used great efforts to beautify the worship of the Sanctuary. Among the 288 Levites he appointed for singing and performing instrumental Music, we find mentioned the "sons of Korah," 1 Chr. 9. 19. including Heman, 1 Chr. 6. 33-38; and also Asaph, 39-44; and Ethan, 15-19. God was doubtless pleased to endow these men with the inspiration of His Spirit, so that they used those poetic talents, which their connexion with the kindred art of Music had led them to cultivate, in the production of compositions like those of their King and patron. To Asaph are ascribed twelve Psalms; to the sons of Korah, eleven, including the 88th, which is also ascribed to Heman, that being the only instance in which the name of the "son" (or descendant) is mentioned; and to Ethan, one. Solomon's name appears before the 72nd and 127th; and that of Moses before the 90th. Special questions respecting authorship will be explained as they arise.

CONTENTS.—As the book contains 150 independent compositions, it is not susceptible of any logical analysis. The Jews having divided it into five books, corresponding to the Five Books of Moses, (1st, 1.-42; 2nd, 43.-72; 3rd, 73.-89; 4th, 90.-106; 5th, 107.-150,) many attempts have been made to discover, in this division, some critical or practical value, but in vain.

Still the Psalms have a form and character peculiar to themselves; and with individual diversities of style and subject, they all assimilate to that form, and together constitute a consistent system of moral truth. They are all poetical, and of that peculiar parallelism (Intro. to Poetical Books) which distinguished Hebrew Poetry. They are all lyrical, or songs adapted to Musical instruments, and all religious lyrics, or such as were designed to be used in the Sanctuary worship.

The distinguishing feature of the Psalms is their devotional character. Whether their matter be didactic, historical, prophetic or practical, it is made the ground

## INTRODUCTION.

or subject of prayer, or praise, or both. The doctrines of theology and precepts of pure morality are here inculcated. God's nature, attributes, perfections, and works of creation, providence and grace, are unfolded.

In the sublimest conceptions of the most exalted verse, His glorious supremacy over the principalities of heaven, earth, and hell, and His holy, wise, and powerful control of all material and immaterial agencies, are celebrated. The great covenant of grace resting on the fundamental promise of a Redeemer, both alike the provisions of God's exhaustless mercy, is set forth in respect of the doctrines of regeneration by the Spirit, forgiveness of sins, repentance toward God, and faith toward Jesus Christ, while its glorious results, involving the salvation of men "from the ends of the earth," are proclaimed in believing, prophetic prayer and thankful praise. The personal history of the authors, and especially David's in its spiritual aspects, is that of God's people generally. Christian biography is edifying only as it is truth illustrated in experience, such as God's Word and Spirit produce. It may be factitious in origin and of doubtful authenticity. But here the experience of the truly pious is detailed, under Divine influence, and "in words which the Holy Ghost" taught. The whole inner life of the pious man is laid open, and Christians of all ages have here the temptations, conflicts, perplexities, doubts, fears, penitent moanings, and overwhelming griefs on the one hand, and the joy and hope of pardoning mercy, the victory over the seductions of false-hearted flatterers, and deliverance from the power of Satan on the other, with which to compare their own spiritual exercises. Here, too, are the fruits of that sovereign mercy, so often sought in earnest prayer, and when found, so often sung in rapturous joy, exhibited by patience in adversity, moderation in prosperity, zeal for God's glory, love for man, justice to the oppressed, holy contempt for the proud, magnanimity towards enemies, faithfulness towards friends, delight in the prosperity of Zion, and believing prayer for her enlargement and perpetuity.

In repeating and amplifying that promise, he speaks not only as a type, but "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," he "foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. His incarnation, humiliating sorrows, persecution, and cruel death are disclosed in the plaintive cries of a despairing sufferer; and His resurrection and ascension, His eternal priesthood, His royal dignity, His prophetic office, the purchase and bestowal of the gifts of the Spirit, the conversion of the nations, the establishment, increase, and perpetuity of the Church, the end of time, and the blessedness of the righteous who acknowledge, and the ruin of the wicked who reject, this King in Zion, are predicted in the language of assured confidence and joy." While these great themes have supplied the people of God with a popular theology and a guide in religious experience and Christian morality, clothed in the language of devotion, they have provided an inspired liturgy in which the pious, of all creeds and sects, have, for nearly three thousand years, poured out their prayers and praises. The pious Jew, before the coming of Christ, mourned over the adversity, or celebrated the future glories, of Zion, in the words of her ancient king. Our Savior, with his disciples, sung one of these hymns on the night on which he was betrayed: he took from one the words in which he uttered the dreadful sorrows of his soul, and died with those of another on his lips. Paul and Silas in the dungeon, primitive Christians in their covert places of worship, or the costly churches of a later day, and the scattered and feeble Christian flocks in the prevalence of darkness and error through the Middle Ages, fed their faith and warmed their love with these consoling songs. Now, throughout the Christian world, in untold forms of version, paraphrase, and imitation, by Papists and Protestants, Prelatists and Presbyterians—Independents, Baptists, Methodists—men of all lands and all creeds, in public and private worship, God is still adored in the sentiments expressed in these venerable Psalms. From the tone of sorrow and suffering which pervade their earlier portions we are gradually borne on amid alternate conflicts and triumphs, mournful complaints and awakening confidence; as we approach the close the tones of sorrow grow feebler, and those of praise wax louder and stronger—till, in the exulting strains of the last Psalm, the chorus of earth mingles with the hallelujahs of the multitude, which no man can number, in the sanctuary above.

Angus' or Bickersteth's arrangement may be profitably used as a guide for finding a Psalm on a special topic. It is a little modified, as follows:

1. Didactic.—Good and bad men, Psalm 1, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73, 75, 84, 91, 92, 94, 112, 121, 125, 127, 128, 133; God's Law, Psalm 19, 119; Human life vain, Psalm 39, 49, 90; Duty of Rulers, Psalm 82, 101.—2. Praise. (1) For God's goodness generally to Israel, Psalm 46,

48, 65, 66, 68, 76, 81, 85, 98, 105, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 149; (2) To Good Men, Psalm 23, 34, 36, 91, 100, 103, 107, 117, 121, 145, 146; (3) Mercies to Individuals, Psalm 9, 18, 22, 30, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138, 144; (4) For His attributes generally, Psalm 8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 95-97, 99, 104, 111, 113-115, 134, 139, 147, 148, 150.—3. Devotional—expressive of (1) Penitence, Psalm 6, 25, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143; (2) Trust in trouble, Psalm 3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 71, 86; (3) Sorrow with Hope, Psalm 13, 22, 69, 77, 88; (4) Of Deep Distress, Psalm 4, 5, 11, 28, 41, 55, 59, 64, 70, 109, 120, 140, 141, 143; (5) Feelings when deprived of Religious Privileges, Psalm 42, 43, 63, 84; (6) Desire for Help, Psalm 7, 17, 26, 35, 44, 60, 74, 79, 83, 89, 94, 102, 129, 137; (7) Intercession, Psalm 20, 67, 122, 132, 144.—4. Historical, Psalm 78, 105, 106.—5. Prophetical, Psalm 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 69, 72, 97, 110, 118.

*Note.*—The compiler of the following notes has omitted all references to authors, as needlessly encumbering the commentary. He has had before him the works of Calvin, Scott, Poole, Ainsworth, Cobbin, Geice, Vatablus, Tholuck, J. H. Michaelis, Rosenmuller, and Alexander. To the two last named he has been particularly indebted for the parallel passages. He has made a free use of the views advanced by these authors, and claims no credit for anything in the work except the conciseness united with fullness of exposition. Whoever attempts it will find it far easier to write a long commentary than a brief one.

The historical summaries of the Psalms are richly instructive. God's choice of the patriarchs, the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, their exodus, temptations of God, rebellions and calamities in the Wilderness, settlement in Canaan, backslidings and reformations, furnish illustrations of God's providential government of His people, individually and collectively, tending to exalt His adorable grace and abase human pride. But the promises and prophecies connected with these summaries, and elsewhere presented in the Psalms, have a far wider reach, exhibiting the relations of the book to the great theme of promise and prophecy,—

THE MESSIAH AND HIS KINGDOM.—David was God's chosen servant to rule His people, as the Head, at once, of the State and the Church, the lineal ancestor "according to the flesh," of His adorable Son, and His type, in His official relations, both in suffering and in triumph. Generally, David's trials by the ungodly depicted the trials of Christ, and his final success the success of Christ's kingdom. Typically, he uses language describing his feelings, which only finds its full meaning in the feelings of Christ. As such it is quoted and applied in the N. T. And farther, in view of the great promise (2 Sam. 7) to him and his seed, to which such frequent reference is made in the Psalms, David was inspired to know, that though his earthly kingdom should perish, his spiritual would ever endure, in the power, beneficence, and glory of Christ's.

## THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

### PSALM I.

**Ver. 1-6.** The character and condition, and the present and future destiny of the pious and the wicked, and described and contrasted, teaching that true piety is the source of ultimate happiness, and sin, of misery. As this is a summary of the teachings of the whole book, this Psalm, whether designedly so placed or not, forms a suitable preface.

1. **Blessed**—*lit., oh, the happiness*—an exclamation of strong emotion, as if resulting from reflecting on the subject. The use of the plural may denote fulness and variety (2 Chronicles, 9. 7). **counsel . . . way . . . seat**—With their corresponding verbs, mark gradations of evil, as

acting on the principles, cultivating the society, and permanently conforming to the conduct of the wicked, who are described by three terms, of which the last is indicative of the boldest impiety (cf. Psalm 26. 4, 5; Jeremiah, 15. 17). 2. **law** — all of God's word then written, especially the books of Moses (cf. Psalm 119. 1, 55, 97, etc.). 3. **like a tree** — (Jeremiah, 17. 7, 8). **planted** — settled, fast. **by** — or over. **the rivers** — canals for irrigation. **shall prosper** — *lit., make prosper*, brings to perfection. The basis of this condition and character is given (Psalm 32. 1). 4. **not so** — either as to conduct or happiness. **like the chaff** — which by eastern modes of winnowing against the wind, was utterly blown away. 5. **stand in the judgment** — be acquitted. They shall be driven from among the good (Matthew, 25. 45, 46). 6. **knoweth the way** — attends to and provides for them (Psalm 101. 6; Proverbs, 12. 10; Hosea, 13. 5). **way of the wicked** — all their plans will end in disappointment and ruin (Psalm 37. 13; 146. 8; Proverbs, 4. 19).

## PSALM II.

**Ver. 1-12.** The number and authorship of this Psalm are stated (Acts, 4. 25; 13. 33). Though the warlike events of David's reign may have suggested its imagery, the scenes depicted, and the subjects presented can only find a fulfillment in the history and character of Jesus Christ, to which, as above cited and Hebrews, 1. 5; 5. 5, the New Testament writers most distinctly testify. In a most animated and highly poetical style, the writer, in "four stanzas of three verses each," sets forth the inveterate and furious, though futile, hostility of men to God and His anointed, God's determination to carry out His purpose, that purpose as stated more fully by His Son, the establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom, and the imminent danger of all who resist, and the blessing of all who welcome this mighty and triumphant king.

1. **Why do the heathen, etc.** — Beholding, in prophetic vision, the peoples and nations, as if in a tumultuous assembly, raging with a fury like the raging of the sea, designing to resist God's government, the writer breaks forth into an exclamation in which are mingled surprise at their folly, and indignation at their rebellion. **heathen** — nations generally, not as opposed to Jews. **people** — or, *lit., peoples*, or races of men. 2. The kings and rulers lead on their subjects. **set themselves** — take a stand. **take counsel** — *lit., sit together*, denoting their deliberation. **anointed** — *Hebrew, Messiah; Greek, Christ* (John, 1. 41). Anointing, as an emblem of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, was conferred on Prophets, Isaiah, 61. 1; Priests, Exodus, 30. 30; and Kings, 1 Samuel, 10. 1; 16. 13; 1 Kings, 1. 39. Hence this title well suited Him who holds all these offices, and was generally used by the Jews before His coming to denote Him (Daniel, 9. 26). While the prophet has in view men's opposition generally, he here depicts it in its culminating aspect as seen in the events of Christ's great trial. Pilate and Herod, and the rulers of the Jews (Matthew, 27. 1; Luke, 23. 1-25), with the furious mob are vividly portrayed. 3. The rebellious purposes of men are more distinctly announced by this representation of their avowal in words, as well as actions. **bands and cords** — denote the restraints of govern-

ment. 4. By a figure whose boldness is only allowable to an inspired writer, God's conduct and language in view of this opposition are now related. **he that sitteth in the heavens**—enthroned in quiet dignities (cf. Psalm 29. 10; Isaiah, 40. 22). **shall laugh**—in supreme contempt: their vain rage excites His derision. He is still *the Lord, lit., Sovereign*, though they rebel. 5. **then he shall speak**—His righteous indignation as well as contempt is roused. For God to speak is for Him to act, for what He resolves He will do (Genesis, 1. 3; Psalm 33. 9. **vex them**—agitate or terrify them (Psalm 83. 15). 6. The purpose here declared, in its execution, involves their overthrow. **yet**—*lit., and*, in an adversative sense. **I have set**—annointed, or *firmly placed*, with allusion in the *Hebrew* to “casting, an image in the mould.” The sense is not materially varied in either case. **my king**—appointed by me and for me (Numbers, 27. 18). **on my holy hill of Zion**—Zion, selected by David as the abode of the ark, and the seat of God's visible residence as (1 Kings, 8. 1), also of David, the head of the Church and nation, and type of Christ, was called holy, and the Church itself came to be thus named (Psalm 9. 11; 51. 18; 99. 2; Isaiah, 8. 18; 18. 7, etc.). 7. The king thus constituted declares the fundamental law of His kingdom, in the avowal of His Sonship, a relation, involving his universal dominion. **this day have I begotten thee**—as 2 Samuel, 7. 14, “he shall be my son,” is a solemn recognition of this relation. The interpretation of this passage to describe the inauguration of Christ as Mediatorial King, by no means impugns the Eternal Sonship of His divine nature. In Acts, 13. 33, Paul's quotation does not imply an application of this passage to the resurrection; for *raised up* in *v.* 32 is used in the sense of Acts, 2. 30; 3. 22, etc., to denote bringing him into being as a man: and not that of resurrection which it has only when, as in *v.* 34, allusion is made to His death (Romans, 1. 4), which says He was declared as to His divine nature to be the Son of God, by the resurrection, only teaches that that event manifested a truth already existing. A similar recognition of his Sonship is introduced Hebrews, 5. 5, by these ends, and by others in Matthew, 3. 17; 17. 5, 8. The hopes of the rebels are thus overthrown, and not only so, the kingdom they opposed is destined to be co-extensive with the earth. **heathen**—or, nations (*v.* 1). **and the uttermost parts of the earth**—Psalm 22. 27, denote universality. 9. His enemies shall be subject to His terrible power (Job, 4. 9; 2 Thessalonians, 2. 8), as His people to His grace (Psalm 110. 2, 3), **rod of iron**—denotes severity (Revelation, 2. 27). **a potter's vessel**—when shivered cannot be mended, which will describe utter destruction. 10-12. **kings... judges**—for rulers generally (Psalm 148. 11), who have been leaders in rebellion should be examples of penitent submission, and with fear for His terrible judgments, mingled with trust in His mercy, acknowledge—**kiss**—the authority of the Son. **perish from the way**—*i.e.*, is suddenly and hopelessly. **kindled but a little**—or, in a little time. **put their trust in him**—or, take refuge in Him (Psalm 5. 11). Men still cherish opposition to Christ in their hearts, and evince it in their lives. Their ruin, without such trust is inevitable (Hebrews. 10. 29), while their happiness in His favour is equally sure.



## PSALM III.

**Ver. 1-8.** For the historical occasion mentioned, cf. 2 Samuel, chs. 15-17. David, in the midst of great distress, with filial confidence, implores God's aid, and, anticipating relief, offers praise.

1. **Lord . . . increased** — The extent of the rebellion (2 Samuel, 15. 13), surprises and grieves him. 2. **say of my soul** — *i.e.*, of me (cf. Psalm 25. 3). The use of soul is common, perhaps it arose from regarding the soul as man's chief part. **no help . . . in God** — rejected by Him. This is the bitterest reproach for a pious man, and denotes a spirit of malignant triumph. **Selah** — This word is of very obscure meaning. It probably denotes *rest* or *pause*, both as to the music and singing, intimating something emphatic in the sentiment (cf. Psalm 19. 16). 3. **But** — *lit.*, and (Psalm 2. 6). He repels the reproach by avowing his continued trust. **shield** — a favourite and often used figure for protection. **my glory** — its source. **lifter up of mine head** — one who raises me from despondency. 4. **cried . . . heard** — Such has been my experience. The last verb denotes a gracious heaving or answering. **out of** (or from) **his holy hill** — Zion (Psalm 2. 6), His visible earthly residence. 5. **the Lord sustained me** — *lit.*, will sustain me, as if his language or thought when he *laid down*, and the reason of his composure. 6. **ten thousands of people** — or, myriads, any very great number (cf. 2 Samuel, 16. 18). 7. **Arise, O Lord** — God is figuratively represented as asleep to denote His apparent indifference (Psalm 7. 6). The use of *cheek-bone* and *teeth* represents his enemies as fierce, like wild beasts ready to devour (Psalm 27. 2), and smiting their cheek-bone (1 Kings, 22. 24), denotes violence and insult. **thou hast broken** — God took his part utterly depriving the enemy of power to injure. 8. An ascription of praise to a delivering God, whose favor is an efficient benefit.

## PSALM IV.

**Ver. 1-8.** *On Neginoth, i.e.*, Stringed Instruments, as the kind of musical accompaniment on other parts of title (cf. Introduction). The historical occasion was probably the same as that of the foregoing. The writer, praying for further relief, admonishes his enemies of the vanity of attacking God's servant, exhorts them to repentance, and avows his confidence and peace in God's favour.

1. **Hear** — as Ps. 3. 4. **God my righteousness** — or, my righteous God, as my holy hill (Psalm 2. 6), who will act towards me on righteous principles. **thou hast enlarged** — expresses relief afforded in opposition to *distress*, which is expressed by a word denoting straits or pressure. Past favour is a ground of hope for future. 2. **sons of men** — Men of note or prominence (cf. 2 Chronicles, 21. 9. **turn my glory** — or, royal dignity. **to shame** — or, reproach. **vanity** — a foolish and hopeless enterprise (Psalm 2. 1). **leasing** — a lie. 3. **godly** — an object as well as subject of divine favour (cf. Psalm 105. 14, 15). 4. **stand in awe** — (Ephesians, 4. 26), from *Septuagint* — be angry. Both clauses are qualified by *not*. 5. Not only repent, but manifest penitence by sacrifices of

righteousness or righteous sacrifices, etc. 6, 7. contrast true with vain confidence. **light of countenance**—figure for favour (Numbers, 6. 26; Psalm 44. 3; 81. 16). **corn and wine**—*lit.*, *new corn and wine*. **increased**—an abundant harvest giving great joy (Isaiah, 9. 3). 8. **both lay me down, etc.**—or, will lie down at once, and sleep in sure confidence and quiet repose (Psalm 3. 5).

## PSALM V.

**Ver. 1-12.** *Upon Nehiloth*—flutes or wind instruments. The writer begs to be heard, on the ground of God's regard for His covenant people and true worshippers as contrasted with His holy hatred to the wicked. He prays for Divine guidance, on account of his watchful, malignant, and deceitful enemies; and also for their destruction, as being also God's enemies. At the same time he expresses his confidence that God will extend aid to His people.

1. **meditation**—moanings of that half-uttered form, to which deep feeling gives rise—groanings, as Romans, 8. 26, 27. 2. **hearken**—incline (the ear, Psalm 10. 17) (cf. Psalm 61. 2)—give close attention. **my cry**—*i.e.*, for help (Psalm 61. 2; Jeremiah, 8. 10). **my king**—thus by covenant relation interested in my cause. 3.—**direct**—*lit.*, *set in order*, as the shew bread was placed or set in order (Exodus, 40. 23). 4. **For, etc.**—God only regards sincere worshippers. **evil**—or, the evil man. **dwell**—lodge, remain under protection. 5. **foolish**—vainglorious and insolent. **iniquity**—especially such as denotes a negation, or defect, *i.e.*, of moral principle. 6. **leasing**—a lie. **the bloody . . . man**—*lit.*, *man of blood*—murderer. 7. **but**—as (Psalm 2. 6), *it.*, *and*. **house**—(1 Chronicles, 9. 23), the tabernacle. **temple**—*lit.*, *palace*, applied to God's residence, the Holy of Holies (1 Samuel, 3. 3; 2 Samuel, 22. 7); the inner part of the tabernacle. **toward**—not in, the high priest alone was allowed to enter. 8. **enemies**—*lit.*, *watchers* (Psalm 17. 11), hence special need of guidance. **in thy righteousness**—an attribute implying faithfulness in promises as well as threatenings. **make thy way straight**—*i.e.*, make the way of providence plain. 9. The wicked are not reliable, because by nature full of wickedness, or *lit.*, *wickedness*, of every kind (Romans, 8. 7). **sepulchre**—a dwelling place of corruption, emitting moral putridness. **flatter**—or make smooth. **their tongue**—speaks deceitfully. **Destroy**—or, condemn them to destruction as guilty. 11. **defendest**—(cf. *Margin*). **love thy name**—thy manifested perfections (Psalm 9. 10). 12. **with favour**—or, acceptance, alluding to the favour shown to an acceptable offering and worshipper (Leviticus, 7. 18; 19. 7). **shield**—(cf. Psalm 3. 3).

## PSALM VI.

**Ver. 1-10.** *On Neginoth* (cf. Psalm 7), *upon Sheminith*—the eighth—an instrument for the eighth key—or, more probably, the bass, as it is contrasted with Alamothe (the treble, Psalm 46), in 1 Chronicles, 15. 20, 21. In deep affliction the Psalmist appeals to God's mercy for relief

from chastisement, which otherwise must destroy him, and thus disable him for God's service. Sure of a gracious answer, he triumphantly rebukes his foes.

1. He owns his ill desert in begging a relief from chastisement. 2. **I am weak** — as a culled plant (Isaiah, 24. 4). **my bones** — the very frame. **are vexed** — (Psalm 2. 5), shaken with fear. 3. **how long?** — shall this be so (cf. Psalm 79. 5). **but** — or, and. **thou** — the sentence is incomplete as expressive of strong emotion. 4. **return** — *i.e.*, to my relief — or, *turn*, as now having His face averted. **for thy mercies' sake** — to illustrate thy mercy. 5. (Cf. Psalm 115. 17, 18; Isaiah, 38. 18). There is no incredulity as to a future state. The contrast is between this scene of life, and the grave or *shoel*, the unseen world of the dead. **give . . . thanks** — or, praise for mercies. 6. By a strong figure the abundance as well as the intensity of grief is depicted. 7. **consumed** — or, has failed, denoting general debility (Psalm 13. 3; 38. 10). **waxeth old** — or, dim, grief — mingled with indignation. 8, 9. Assured of God's hearing, he suddenly defies his enemies by an address indicating that he no longer fears them; 10. and knows they will be disappointed and in their turn (cf. *v.* 3) be terror-stricken or confounded.

## PSALM VII.

**Ver. 1-17.** *Shiggaion* — A plaintive song or elegy. Though obscure in details, this title seems to intimate that the occasion of this Psalm was some event in David's persecution by Saul. He prays for relief, because he is innocent, and God will be glorified in his vindication. He thus passes to the celebration of God's righteous government, in defending the upright, and punishing the wicked, whose malignant devices will result in their own ruin; and, confident of God's aid, closes with rejoicing.

1, 2. Though many enemies set upon him, one is singled out as prominent; and compared to a wild beast tearing his prey to pieces (cf. I Samuel, 20. 1; 23. 23; 26. 19). 3. **if I have done this** — *i.e.*, the crime charged in the "words of Cush" (cf. I Samuel, 24. 9). 4. If I have injured my friend. **yea, I have delivered** — This makes a good sense, but interrupts the course of thought, and hence it is proposed to render — *if I have spoiled my enemy* — in either case cf. I Samuel, 24. 4-17; 31. 8, 11. 5. This is the consequence, is such has been his conduct. **mine honour** — (cf. Psalm 3. 3; 4. 2) — my personal and official dignity. 6. God is involved as if hitherto careless of him (Psalm 3. 7; 9. 18). **rage** — the most violent, like a flood rising over a river's banks. **the judgment . . . commanded** — or, ordained; a just decision. 7. **compass thee** — as those seeking justice. **return thou on high** — assume the judgment seat, to be honoured as a just Ruler by them. 8. Though not claiming innocence in general, he can confidently do so in this case. and in demanding from the Judge of all the earth a judgment, he virtuously asks acquittal. 9. **the hearts and reins** — the affections and motives of men, or the seat of them (cf. Psalm 16. 7; 26. 2); as we use heart and bosom or breast. 10. **defence** — *lit.*, *shield* (Psalm 5. 12). 11. **judgeth** — as *v.* 8. **the wicked** — though not expressed, are implied, for

they alone are left as objects of anger. 12, 13. and here distinctly pointed out, though by changing the person, a very common mode of speech, one is selected as a representative of wicked men generally. The military figures are of obvious meaning. **against the persecutors** — some render "for burning," but the former is the best sense. Arrows for burning would be appropriate in besieging a town, not in warring against one man or a company in open fight. 14. The first clause expresses the general idea that wicked men labour to do evil, the others carry out the figure fully. 15, 16. 1 Samuel, 18. 17; 31. 2, illustrate the statement whether alluded to or not. The verses are expository of v. 14, showing how the devices of the wicked end in disappointment, falsifying their expectations. 17. **his righteousness** — (Psalm 5. 8). Thus illustrated in the defence of his servant and punishment of the wicked.

## PSALM VIII.

**Ver. 1-9.** *Upon* (or according to the) *Gittith*, probably means that the musical performance was directed to be according to a tune of that name; which, derived from *Gath*, a wine-press, denotes a tune (used in connection with gathering the vintage) of a joyous character. All the Psalms to which this term is prefixed are of such a character. The Psalmist gives vent to his admiration of God's manifested perfections, by celebrating His condescending and beneficent providence to man as evinced by the position of the race, as originally created and assigned a dominion over the works of His hands.

1, **thy name** — perfections (Psalm 5. 11; 7. 17). **who hast set** — *lit.*, *which, set thou thy glory, etc.*, or, *which glory of thine set thou*, etc., *i.e.*, make it more conspicuous as if earth was too small a theatre for its display. A similar exposition suits the usual rendering. 2. So manifest are God's perfections, that by very weak instruments, He conclusively sets forth His praise. Infants are not only wonderful illustrations of God's power and skill, in their physical constitution, instincts, and early developed intelligence, but also in their spontaneous admiration of God's works, by which they put to shame — **still** — or, silence men who rail and cavil against God. A special illustration of the passage is afforded in Matthew, 21. 16, when our Saviour *stilled* the cavillers by quoting these words; for the glories with which God invested His incarnate Son, even in His humiliation, constitute a most wonderful display of the perfections of His wisdom, love, and power. In view of the scope of v. 4-8 (see below), this quotation by our Saviour may be regarded as an exposition of the prophetic character of the words. **sucklings** — among the Hebrews were probably of an age to speak (cf. 1 Samuel, 1. 22-24; Mark, 7. 27). **ordained** — founded, or prepared, and perfected, which occurs in Matthew, 21. 16; taken from the *Septuagint* has the same meaning. **strength** — In the quotation of the New Testament, *praise* occurs as the consequence or effect put for the cause (cf. Psalm 118. 14). **avenger** — as in Psalm 44. 16; one desirous of revenge, disposed to be quarrelsome, and so apt to cavil against God's government. 3, 4. The allusion to the magnificence of the visible heavens is introduced for the purpose of illustrating God's condescension, who, though the mighty

creator of these glorious worlds of light, makes man the object of regard and recipient of favour. **man** — *lit., frail man*, an allusion to his essential infirmity. **son of man** — only varies the form of speech. **visitest** — in favour (Psalm 65. 10). This favor is now more fully illustrated. 5-8. God has placed man next in dignity to angels, and but a little lower, and crowned him with the empire of the world. **glory and honour** — are the attributes of royal dignity (Psalm 21. 5; 45. 3). The position assigned man is that described (Genesis, 1. 26-28), as be'onging to Adam, in his original condition, the terms employed in detailing the subjects of man's dominion corresponding with those there used. In a modified sense, in his present fallen state, man is still invested with some remains of this original dominion. It is very evident, however, by the apostle's inspired exposition (Hebrews, 2. 6-8; 1 Corinthians, 15. 27, 28), that the language here employed, finds its fulfillment only in the final exaltation of Christ's human nature. There is no limit to the "*all things*" mentioned, God only excepted, who "put all things under." Man, in the person and glorious destiny of Jesus of Nazareth, the Second Adam, the head and representative of the race, will not only be restored to its original position, but exalted far beyond it. "The last enemy, death," through fear of which, man, in his present estate, is "all his lifetime in bondage," "shall be destroyed." Then *all things* will have been put under his feet, "principalities and powers be made subject to him." This view, so far from being alien from the scope of the passage, is more consistent than any other; for man as a race cannot well be conceived to have a higher honour put upon him, than to be thus exalted in the person and destiny of Jesus of Nazareth. And at the same time, by no other of his glorious manifestations has God more illustriously declared those attributes which distinguish His name than in the scheme of redemption, of which this economy forms such an important and essential feature. In the generic import of the language, as describing man's present relation to the work of God's hands, it may be regarded as typical, thus allowing not only the usual application, but also this higher sense which the inspired writers of the New Testament have assigned it. 9. Appropriately, the writer closes this brief but pregnant and sublime song of praise with the terms of admiration with which it was opened.

## PSALM IX.

**Ver. 1-20.** Upon *Muth-labben*, or, after the manner according to "death to the Son," by which some song was known, to whose air or melody the Musician is directed to perform this Psalm. This mode of denoting a song by some prominent word or words is still common (cf. Psalm 22). The Psalmist praises God for deliverance from his enemies, and celebrates the divine government, for providing security to God's people and punishment to the wicked. Thus encouraging himself, he prays for new occasions to recount God's mercies, and confident of His continued judgment on the wicked and vindication of the oppressed, he implores a prompt and efficient manifestation of the divine sovereignty.

1. Heart-felt gratitude will find utterance. 3-5. **when... are turned back** — It is the result of God's power alone. He, as a righteous judge,

(Psalm 7. 11), vindicates His people. He rebukes by acts as well as words (Psalm 6. 1; 18. 15), and so effectually as to destroy the names of nations as well as persons. 6. *Lit., as to the enemy finished are his ruins for ever. Thou (God) hast destroyed, etc.* (1 Samuel, 15. 3, 7; 27. 8, 9). The wicked are utterly undone. Their ruins shall never be repaired. 7, 8. God's eternal possession of a throne of justice is contrasted with the ruin of the wicked. 9, 10. So that the oppressed, and all who know Him (Psalm 5. 3; 7. 1), find Him a sure refuge. 11. (Cf. Psalm 2. 6; 3. 4). 12. **for blood** — *i.e.*, murders (Psalm 5. 6), including all the oppressions of His people. **maketh inquisition** — (cf. Genesis, 9. 5). He will avenge their cause. 13. **gates** — or, regions — **of death** — Gates being the entrance is put up for the bounds. 14. **gates . . . Zion** — The enclosure of the city (cf. Psalm 48. 12; Isaiah, 23. 12), or, church, as denoted by this phrase contrasted with that of death, carries out the idea of exaltion as well as deliverance. Signal favours should lead us to render signal and public thanks. 15, 16. The undesigned results of the devices of the wicked prove them to be of God's overruling or ordering, especially when those results are destructive to the wicked themselves. **higgaion** — Means meditation, and, combined with Selah, seems to denote a pause of unusual solemnity and emphasis (cf. Psalm 3. 2). Though Selah occurs seventy-three times, this is the only case in which Higgaion is found. In the view which is given here of the retribution on the wicked as an instance of God's wise and holy ordering, we may well pause in adoring wonder and faith. 17. **shall be turned** — Or, shall turn, retreating under God's vengeance, and driven by Him to the extreme of destruction, even hell itself. Those who forget God are classed with the depraved and openly profane. 18. (Cf. Psalm 13.). **the needy** — *Lit., poor*, as deprived of anything; hence miserable. **expectation of the poor** — Or, meek, humble made so by affliction. 19. **arise** — (cf. Psalm 3. 7). **let not man** — (Psalm 8. 4). **let . . . be judged** — And, of course, condemned. 20. By their effectual subjection, make them to realise their frail nature (Psalm 8. 4), and deter them from all conceit and future rebellion.

## PSALM X.

**Ver. 1-18.** The Psalmist mourns God's apparent indifference to his troubles, which are aggravated by the successful malice, blasphemy, pride, deceit, and profanity of the wicked. On the just and discriminating providence of God, he relies for the destruction of their false security, and the defense of the needy.

1. These are, of course, figurative terms (cf. Psalm 7. 6; 13. 1; etc.) **hidest** — Supply *thine eyes or face*. 2. *Lit., In pride of the wicked they (the poor or humble, v. 17; Psalm 12. 5), shall be taken in the devices they (the proud) have imagined.* 3. **his heart's** — (or *soul's*) **desire** — *i.e.*, his success in evil. **and blesseth, etc.** — *He (the wicked) blesseth the covetous, he dispiseth the Lord.* 4. The face expresses the self-conceit, whose fruit is practical atheism (Psalm 14. 1). 5, 6. Such is his confidence in the permanence of his way or course of life, that he disregards God's providential government, (*out of sight*, because he will not look,

Isaiah, 26. 11), sneers at his enemies, and boasts perpetual freedom from evil. 7-10. The malignity, and deceit (Psalm 140. 3), of such are followed by acts combining cunning, fraud and violence (cf. Proverbs, 1. 11, 18), aptly illustrated by habits of the lion, and of hunters taking their prey. *Poor*, in *v.* 8, 10, 14, represents a word peculiar to this Psalm, meaning the sad or sorrowful: in *v.* 9, as usual, it means the pious or meek sufferer. **eyes. . . privily set** — He watches with half-closed eyes, appearing not to see. **croucheth** — As a lion gathers himself into as small compass as possible to make the greater spring. **fall by his strong ones** — The figure of the lion is dropped, and this phrase means the accomplices of the chief or leading wicked man. 11. As before, such conduct implies disbelief or disregard of God's government. 12. (Cf. Psalm 9. 19; 3. 7). **humble** — (cf. *v.* 17, and *Marg.*). **lift up thine head** — Exert thy power. 13, 14. It is in vain to suppose God will overlook sin, however forbearing; for He carefully examines or beholds all wickedness, and will mark it by His providential (*thy hand*) punishment. **mischief and spite** — Provocation and trouble of the sufferer (cf. Psalm 6. 7; 7. 14). **committeth** — Or, leaves (his burden) on thee. **arm** — Power. **till thou find none** — So far from not requiting (*v.* 11. 13), God will utterly destroy the wicked and his deeds (Psalm 9, 5, 6; 34. 16; 37. 36. 16-18. God reigns. The wicked, if for a time successful, shall be cut off. He hears, and confirms the hearts of His suffering people (Psalm 112. 7), executes justice for the feeble, and represses the pride and violence of conceited though frail men (cf. Psalm 9. 16).

## PSALM XI.

**Ver. 1-7.** On title cf. *Introduction*. Alluding to some event in his history, as 1 Samuel, 23, 13, the Psalmist avows his confidence in God, when admonished to flee from his raging persecutors, whose destruction of the usual foundation of safety rendered all his efforts useless. The grounds of his confidence are God's supreme dominion, His watchful care of His people, His hatred to the wicked, and judgments on them, and His love for righteousness and the righteous.

1. **my soul** — Me (Psalm 3. 2). **flee** — *Lit.*, *flee ye*; *i.e.*, he and his companion. **as a bird to your mountain** — Having as such no safety but in flight (cf. 1 Samuel, 26. 30; Lamentations, 3. 52). 2. **privily** — *Lit.*, *in darkness*, treacherously. 3. *Lit.*, *The foundations* (*i.e.*, of good order and law), *will be destroyed, what has the righteous done* (to sustain them)? All his efforts have failed. 4. **temple. . . heaven** — The connection seems to denote God's heavenly residence; the terms used is taken from the place of His visible earthly abode (Psalm 2. 6; 3. 4; 5. 7). Thence He inspects men with close scrutiny. 5. The trial of the righteous results in their approval, as it is contrasted with God's hatred to the wicked. 6. Their punishment is described by vivid figures denoting abundant, sudden, furious, and utter destruction (cf. Genesis, 19. 24; Job, 18. 15; Psalm 7. 15; 9. 15. **cup** — Is a frequent figure for God's favour or wrath (Psalm 16. 5; 23. 5; Matthew, 20. 22, 23). 7. **his countenance** — *lit.*, *their faces* — A use of the plural applied to God, like Genesis, 1. 26; 3. 22; 11. 7; Isaiah, 6. 8, etc., denoting the

fulness of his perfections, or more probably originating in a reference to the trinity of persons. Faces is used as eyes, (*v.* 4), expressing here God's complacency towards the upright, (cf. Psalm 34. 15, 16).

## PSALM XII.

**Ver. 1-8.** On title cf. *Introduction* and Psalm 6. The Psalmist laments the decrease of good men. The pride and deceit of the wicked provokes God's wrath, whose promise to avenge the cause of pious sufferers will be verified even amidst prevailing iniquity.

1. **the faithful** — Or *lit., faithfulness* (Psalm 31. 23). 2. The want of it is illustrated by the prevalence of deceit and instability. 3. 4. Boasting (Daniel, 7. 25) is, like flattery, a species of lying. **lips... and tongue** — For persons. 5. The writer intimates his confidence by depicting God's actions (cf. Psalm 9. 19; 10. 12), as coming to save the poor at whom the wicked sneers (Psalm 10. 5). 6. **the words** — *Lit., saying of* (*v.* 5). **seven times** — Thoroughly (Daniel, 3. 19). 7. **them** — (*Margin*). 8. The wicked roam undisturbed, doing evil, when villainess or vile men are exalted.

## PSALM XIII.

**Ver. 1-6.** On title cf. *Introduction*. The Psalmist mourning God's absence and the triumph of his enemies, prays for relief ere he is totally destroyed, and is encouraged to hope his trust will not be in vain.

1. The forms of expression and figure here used are frequent (cf. Psalm 9. 12, 18; 10. 11, 12). **how long... for ever** — Shall it be for ever? 2. The counsels or devices of his heart afford no relief. **lighten mine eyes** — Dim with weakness, denoting approaching death (cf. 1 Samuel, 14. 27-29; Psalm 6. 7; 38. 10). 4. **rejoice** — *Lit., shout in triumph*. **I am moved** — Cast down from a firm position (Psalm 10. 6), 5, 6. Trust is followed by rejoicing in the deliverance which God effects, and, instead of his enemy, he can lift the song of triumph.

## PSALM XIV.

**Ver. 1-7.** The practical atheism, and total and universal depravity, of the wicked, with their hatred to the good, are set forth. Yet, as they dread God's judgments when He vindicates His people, the Psalmist prays for His delivering power.

1. Sinners are termed *fools*, because they think and act contrary to right reason (Genesis, 34. 7; Joshua, 7. 15; Psalm 39. 8; 74. 18, 22). **in his heart** — To himself (Genesis, 6. 12). 2. **looked** — In earnest inquiry. **understand** — As opposed to fools. 3. **filthy** — *Lit., spoiled, soured, corrupted* (Job, 15. 16; Romans, 3. 12). 4-6. Their conduct evinces indifference rather than ignorance of God; for when He appears in judgment they are stricken with great fear. **who eat up my people** — To express their beastly fury (Proverbs, 30. 14; Habakkuk, 3. 14);



to *call on the Lord* is to worship Him. 7. **captivity** — Denotes any great evil. **Zion** — God's abode, from which He revealed His purposes of mercy, as He now does by the Church (cf. 3. 4; 20. 2), and which He rules and all other things for the good of His people (Ephesians, 1. 22).

## PSALM XV.

**Ver. 1-5.** Those who are fit for communion with God may be known by a conformity to His law, which is illustrated in various important particulars.

1. **abide** — Or, sojourn (cf. Psalm 5. 4), where it means under God's protection here, as Psalm 23. 6; 27. 4, 6), communion. **tabernacle** — Seat of the ark (2 Samuel, 6. 17), the symbol of God's presence. **holy hill** — (cf. Psalm 2. 6). 2. **walketh** — (cf. Psalm 1. 1). **uprightly** — In a complete manner, as to all parts of conduct (Genesis, 17. 1), not as to degree. **worketh** — Or, does. **righteousness** — What is right. **in his heart** — Sincerely (Proverbs, 23. 7). 3. He neither slanders nor spreads slander. 4. Love and hate are regulated by a regard to God's. **swareth . . . hurt** — Or what so results (cf. Leviticus, 5. 4). 5. (Cf. Leviticus, 25. 37; Deuteronomy, 23. 19, 20). **usury** — Is derived from a verb meaning *to bite*. All gains made by the wrongful loss of others are forbidden. **taketh reward, etc.** — The innocent would not otherwise be condemned (cf. Exodus, 23. 8; Deuteronomy, 16. 19). Bribery of all sorts is denounced. **doeth these, etc.** — Such persons admitted to God's presence and favour shall (Psalm 10. 6; 13. 5), be moved.

## PSALM XVI.

**Ver. 1-II.** *Michtam* or, by the change of one letter, *Michtab* — a *writing*, such as a poem or song (cf. Isaiah, 38. 9). Such a change of the letter *m* for *b* was not unusual. The position of this word in connection with the author's name being that usually occupied by some term, such as Psalm or song, denoting the style or matter of composition, favours this view of its meaning, though we know not why this and Psalm 56-60, should be specially called *a writing*, *A golden* (Psalm), or *a Memorial*, are explanations proposed by some — neither of which, however, applicable here, appear adapted to the other Psalms where the term occurs. According to Peter (Acts, 2. 25), and Paul (Acts, 13. 35), this Psalm relates to Christ, and expresses the feelings of His human nature, in view of His sufferings and victory over death and the grave, including His subsequent exaltation at the right hand of God. Such was the exposition of the best earlier Christian interpreters. Some moderns have held that the Psalm relates exclusively to David, but this view is expressively contradicted by the apostles; others hold that the language of the Psalm is applicable to David as a type of Christ, capable of the higher sense assigned it in the New Testament. But then the language of *v. 10* cannot be used of David in any sense, for "he saw corruption." Others again propose to refer the first part to David, and the last to Christ; but it is evident that no change in the subject of the

Psalm is indicated. Indeed, the person who appeals to God for help is evidently the same who rejoices in having found it. In referring the whole Psalm to Christ, it is, however, by no means denied that much of its language is expressive of the feelings of His people, so far as in their humble measure they have the feelings of trust in God expressed by Him, their head and representative. Such use of His language, as recorded in His last prayer (John, 17.); and even that He used in Gethsemane, under similar modifications, is equally proper. The propriety of this reference of the Psalm to Christ will appear in the scope and interpretation. In view of the sufferings before Him, the Saviour, with that instinctive dread of death manifested in Gethsemane, calls on God to "preserve" Him: He avows His delight in holiness and abhorrence of the wicked and their wickedness; and for "the joy that was set before Him, despising the shame," encouraging Himself; contemplating the glories of the heritage appointed Him. Thus even death and the grave lose their terror in the assurance of the victory to be attained and "the glory that should follow."

1. **preserve me** — Keep or watch over my interests. **in thee . . . I . . . trust** — As one seeking shelter from pressing danger. 2. **my soul** — Must be supplied; expressed in similar cases (Psalm 42. 5, 11). **my goodness . . . thee** — This obscure passage is variously expounded. Either one of two expositions falls in with the context. *My goodness* or merit is not on account of thee — *i.e.*, is not for thy benefit. Then follows the contrast of *v.* 3, (but is) in respect, or for the saints, etc. — *i.e.*, it enures to them. Or *my goodness* — or happiness is not — *besides thee* — *i.e.*, without thee I have no other source of happiness. Then, "*to the saints,*" etc., means that the same privilege of deriving happiness from God only is theirs. The first is most consonant with the Messianic character of the Psalm, though the latter is not inconsistent with it. 3. **saints in the earth** — *i.e.*, land of Palestine — the residents of God's chosen people — figuratively for the Church. **excellent** — Or, nobles, distinguished for moral excellence. 4. He expresses his abhorrence of those who seek other sources of happiness or objects of worship, and, by characterising their rites by drink-offerings of blood, clearly denotes idolaters. The word for *sorrows* is by some rendered idols; but, though a similar word to that for idols, it is not the same. In selecting such a term, there may be an allusion, by the author, to the sorrows produced by idolatrous practices. 5-7. God is the chief good, and supplies all need (Deuteronomy, 10. 9). **portion of mine inheritance and of my cup** — May contain allusion to the daily supply of food, and also to the inheritance of Levi (Deuteronomy, 18. 1, 2). **maintainest** — Or, *drawest out* my lot — enlargest it. The next verse carries out this idea more fully. **given me counsel** — Cared for me. **my reins.** — The supposed seat of emotion and thought (Psalm 7. 9; 26. 2). **instruct me** — Or, excite to acts of praise (Isaiah, 53. 11, 12; Hebrew, 12. 2). 8. With God's presence and aid he is sure of safety (Psalm 10. 6; 15. 5; John, 12. 27, 28; Hebrews, 5. 7, 8). 9. **glory** — As heart (Psalm 7. 5), for self. In (Acts, 2. 26), after the Septuagint, *my tongue* as "the glory of the frame" — the instrument for praising God. **flesh** — If taken as opposed to **soul** (*v.* 10), it may mean the body; otherwise, the whole person (cf.

Psalm 63. 1; 84. 2). **rest in hope** — (cf. *Margin*). 10. **soul** — Or, self. This use of soul for the person is frequent (Genesis, 12. 5; Psalm 3. 2; 7. 2; 11. 1), even when the body may be the part chiefly affected, as (Psalm 35. 13; 105. 18). Some cases are cited as (Leviticus, 22. 4; Numbers, 6. 6; 9. 6, 10; 19. 13; Haggai, 2. 13, etc.), which seem to justify assigning the meaning of *body*, or dead body; but it will be found that the latter sense is given by some adjunct expressed or implied. In those cases *person* is in the proper sense. **will not leave...hell** — Abandon to the power of (Job, 39. 14; Psalm 49. 10). Hell as (Genesis, 42. 38; Psalm 6. 5; Jonah, 2. 2), the state or region of death, and so frequently — or the *grave itself* (Job, 14. 13; 17. 13; Ecclesiastes, 9. 10, etc.). So the Greek *Hades* (cf. Acts, 2. 27, 31). The context alone can settle whether the state mentioned is one of suffering, and place of the damned (cf. Psalm 9. 17; Proverbs, 5. 5; 7. 27). **wilt...suffer** — *Lit., give, or, appoint.* **holy one** — (Psalm 4. 3), one who is the object of God's favor, and so a recipient of divine grace which he exhibits — *pious.* **to see** — Or, experience — undergo (Luke, 2. 26). **corruption** — Some render the word, *the pit*, which is possible, but for the obvious sense which the apostle's exposition (Acts, 2. 27; 13. 36, 37), gives. The sense of the whole passage is clearly this — by the use of *flesh* or *soul*, the disembodied state produced by death is indicated; but, on the other hand, no more than the *state of death* is intended; for the last clause of *v.* 10 is strictly parallel with the first, and *Holy One* correspond to *soul*, and *corruption* to *hell*. As *Holy One*, or David (Acts, 13. 36, 37), which denotes the *person*, including soul and body, is used for *body*, of which only corruption can be predicated (cf. Acts, 2. 31). So on the contrary, *soul*, which literally means the immaterial part, is used for the person. The language may thus be paraphrased, "In death shall I hope for resurrection; for I shall not be left under its dominion and within its bounds, or be subject to the corruption which ordinarily ensues." 11. Raised from the dead, he shall die no more, death hath no more dominion over him. **thou wilt show me** — Guide me to attain. **the path of life** — Or, *lives* — the plural denoting variety and abundance — immortal blessedness of every sort — or life often denotes. **in thy presence** — Or, *before thy face*. The frequent use of this plural form for faces may contain an allusion to the Trinity (Numbers, 6. 25, 26; Psalm 17. 15; 31. 16). **at thy right hand** — To which Christ was exalted (Psalm 110. 1; Acts, 2. 33; Colossians, 3. 1; Hebrews, 1. 3). In the glories of this state, He shall see of the travail (Isaiah, 53. 10, 11; Philippians, 2. 9), of his soul, and be satisfied.

## PSALM XVII.

**Ver. 1-15.** This Psalm is termed a prayer, because the language of petition is predominant. With a just cause, sincerely presented, the writer prays for a just decision and help and protection. Pleading former mercies as a ground of hope, he urges his prayer in view of the malice, pride, rapacity, and selfishness of his foes, whose character is contrasted with his pious devotion and delight in God's favour. 2. **sentence** — acquitting judgment. **from thy presence** — thy tribunal.

things that are equal—just and right, do thou regard. 3. **proved . . . visited . . . tried**—his character was most rigidly tested, at all times, and by all methods, affliction and others (Psalm, 7. 10). **purposed that, etc.**—or, my mouth does not exceed my purpose—I am sincere. 4. **works of men**—sinful practices. **by the word of thy lips**—as a guide (Psalm 119. 9, 11, 95). **destroyer**—violent man. 5. may be read as an assertion; “my steps or goings have held on to thy paths.” 6. **wilt hear me**—*i.e.*, graciously (Psalm 3. 4). 7. **show**—set apart as special and eminent (Exodus, 8. 18; Psalm 4. 3). **thy right hand**—for thy power. 8. Similar figures denoting the preciousness of God’s people in his sight, in Deuteronomy, 32. 10, 11; Matthew, 23. 37. 9. **compass me**—(cf. Psalm 118. 10-12). 10. **inclosed . . . fat**—are become proud in prosperity, and insolent to God (Deuteronomy, 32. 15; Psalm 73. 7). 11. They pursue us as beasts tracking their prey. 12. The figure made more special, by that of a lion *lurking*. 13-15. **disappoint**—*lit.*, *come before*, or, *encounter him*. Supply *with before sword* (v. 13), and *hand* (v. 14). These denote God’s power. **men . . . world**—all men of this present time. They appear, by fulness of bread and large families, to be prosperous; but (v. 15) he implies this will be transient, contrasting his better portion in a joyful union with God hereafter.

## PSALM XVIII.

**Ver. 1-50.** “The servant of the Lord,” which in the Hebrew precedes “David,” is a significant part of the title (and not a mere epithet of David), denoting the inspired character of the song, as the production of one intrusted with the execution of God’s will. He was not favoured by God because he served Him, but served Him because selected and appointed by God in His sovereign mercy. After a general expression of praise and confidence in God for the future, David gives a sublimely poetical description of God’s deliverance, which he characterizes as an illustration of God’s justice to the innocent and His righteous government. His own prowess and success are celebrated as the results of divine aid, and, confident of its continuance, he closes in terms of triumphant praise. 2 Samuel, 22. is a copy of this Psalm, with a few unimportant variations recorded there as a part of the history, and repeated here as a part of a collection designed for permanent use.

1. **I will love thee**—with most tender affection. 2, 3. The various terms used describe God as an object of the most implicit and reliable trust. **rock**—*lit.*, *a cleft rock*, for concealment. **strength**—a firm, immovable rock. **horn of my salvation**—the horn, as the means of attack or defence of some of the strongest animals, is a frequent emblem of the power or strength efficiently exercised (cf. Deuteronomy, 33. 17; Luke, 1. 69). **tower**—*lit.*, *high place*, beyond reach of danger. **to be praised**—for past favours, and worthy of confidence. 4. **sorrows**—*lit.*, *bands as of a net* (Psalm 116. 3). **floods**—denotes multitude. **death**—and **hell** (cf. Psalm 16. 10)—are personified as man’s great enemies (cf. Revelation, 20. 13, 14). **prevented**—encountered me, crossed my path and endangered my safety. He does not mean he was in their power. 6. He relates his methods to procure relief when distressed, and his success. **temple**—

(cf. Psalm 11. 4). 7, 8. God's coming described in figures drawn from His appearance on Sinai (cf. Deuteronomy, 32. 22). **smoke out...his nostrils** — bitter in his wrath (cf. Psalm 74. 1), **by it** — *i.e.*, the fire (Exodus, 19. 18). 9. **darkness** — or, a dense cloud (Exodus, 19. 16; Deuteronomy, 5. 22). 10. **cherub** — angelic agents (cf. Genesis, 3. 24), the figures of which were placed over the ark (1 Samuel, 4. 4), representing God's dwelling; used here to enhance the majesty of the divine advent. *Angels* and *winds* may represent all rational and irrational agencies of God's providence (cf. Psalm 104. 3, 4). **did fly** — rapidity of motion adds to the grandeur of the scene. 11. **dark waters** — or, clouds heavy with vapour. 12. Out of this obscurity, which impresses the beholder with awe and dread, He reveals Himself by sudden light and the means of His terrible wrath (Joshua, 10. 11; Psalm 78. 47). 13. The storm breaks forth — thunder follows lightning, and hail with repeated lightning, as often seen, like balls or coals of fire, succeed (Exodus, 9. 23). 14. The fiery brightness of lightning, in shape like burning arrows rapidly shot through the air, well represents the most terrible part of an awful storm. Before the terrors of such a scene the enemies are confounded and overthrown in dismay. 15. The tempest of the air is attended by appropriate results on earth. The language though not expressive of any special physical changes, represents the utter subversion of the order of nature. Before such a God none can stand. 16-19. **from above** — as seated on a throne, directing these terrible scenes. God — **sent** — His hand (Psalm 144. 7), reached down to His humble worshipper and delivered him. **many waters** — calamities (Job 30. 14; Psalm 124. 4, 5). **prevented** — (*v.* 3). **a large place** — denotes safety or relief, as contrasted with the straits of distress (Psalm 4. 1). All his deliverance is ascribed to God, and this sublime poetical representation is given to inspire the pious with confidence and the wicked with dread. 20-24. The statements of innocence, righteousness, etc., refer, doubtless, to his personal and official conduct and his purposes during all the trials to which he was subjected in Saul's persecutions and Absalom's rebellions, as well as the various wars in which he had been engaged as the head and defender of God's Church and people. **upright before him** — in my relation to God I have been perfect as to all parts of His law. The perfection does not relate to degree. **mine iniquity** — perhaps the thought of his heart to kill Saul (1 Samuel, 24. 6). That David does not allude to all his conduct, in all relations, is evident from Psalm 51. 1, etc. 25-27. God renders to men according to their deeds in a penal, not vindictive, sense (Leviticus, 26. 23, 24), **merciful** — or, kind (Psalm 4. 3). **froward** — contrary to. **the afflicted people** — *i.e.*, the humbly pious. **high looks** — pride (Psalm 101. 5; 131. 1). 28. *To give one light* is to make prosperous (Job, 18. 5, 6; 21. 17). **thou** — is emphatic, as if to say, I can fully confide in *thee* for help. 29. And this on past experience, in his military life, set forth by these figures. 30-32. God's perfection is the source of his own, which has resulted from his trust on the one hand, and God's promised help on the other. **tried** — "as metals are tried by fire and proved genuine" (Psalm 12. 6). *Shield* (Psalm 3. 3). *Girding* was essential to free motion on account of the looseness of oriental dresses, hence it is an expressive figure for describing the gift of

strength. 35-36. God's help farther described — He gives swiftness to pursue or elude his enemies (Habakkuk, 3. 19), strength, protection, and a firm footing. **thy gentleness** — as applied to God — condescension — or, that which He gives, in the sense of *humility* (cf. Proverbs, 22. 4). **enlarged my steps** — made ample room (cf. Proverbs, 4. 12). 37-41). In actual conflict, by God's aid, the defeat of his enemies is certain. A present and continued success is expressed. **that rose up against me** — *lit., insurgents* (Psalm 3. 1; 44. 5). **given me the necks** — *lit., backs of the necks* — made them retreat (Exodus, 23. 27; Joshua, 7. 3). 42. This conquest was complete. 43-45. Not only does he conquer civil foes, but foreigners, who are driven from their places of refuge. **submit, etc.** — (cf. *Margin*) — *i.e.*, show a forced subjection. 46. **the Lord liveth** — contrasts Him with idols (1 Corinthians, 8. 4). 47, 48. **avengeth me** — his cause is espoused by God as His own. **lifteth me up** — to safety and honours. 49, 50. Paul (Romans, 15. 9) quotes from this doxology to show that, under the Old Testament economy, others than the Jews were regarded as subjects of that spiritual government, of which David was head, and in which character his deliverance and victories were typical of the more illustrious triumphs of David's greater Son. The language of *v.* 50 justifies this view in its distinct allusion to the great promise (cf. 2 Samuel, 7). In all David's success he saw the pledges of a fulfilment of that promise, and he mourned in all his adversities not only in view of his personal suffering, but because he saw in them evidences of danger to the great interests which were committed to his keeping. It is in these aspects of his character that we are led properly to appreciate the importance attached to his sorrows and sufferings, his joys and successes.

## PSALM XIX.

**Ver. 1-14.** After exhibiting the harmonious revelation of God's perfections made by His works and His word, the Psalmist prays for conformity to the divine teaching.

1. **the glory of God** — is the sum of His perfections (Psalm 24. 7-10; Romans, 1. 20). **handiwork** — old English for work of his hands. **firmament** — another word for heavens (Genesis, 1. 8). 2. **uttereth** — pours forth — as a stream — a perpetual testimony. 3. Though there is no articulate speech or words; yet, without these, their voice is heard (cf. *Margin*). **Their line** — or, instruction — the influence exerted by their tacit display of God's perfections. Paul, (Romans, 10. 8), quoting from the *Septuagint*, uses *sound*, which gives the same sense. 5, 6. The sun as the most glorious heavenly body, is specially used to illustrate the sentiment, and his vigorous, cheerful daily, and extensive course, and his reviving heat (including light), well display the wondrous wisdom of his Maker. 7, 9. The law is described by six names, epithets, and effects. It is a rule, God's testimony for the truth, His special and general prescription of duty, fear (as its cause,) and judicial decision. It is distinct and certain, reliable; right, pure, holy, and true. Hence it revives those depressed by doubts, makes wise the unskilled (2 Timothy, 3. 15), **rejoices the lover of truth, strengthens the desponding** (Psalm 13. 4; 34-

6), provides permanent principles of conduct, and by God's grace brings a rich reward. 12, 14. The clearer our view of the law, the more manifest are our sins. Still, for its full effect, we need divine grace to show us our faults, acquit us, restrain us from the practice, and free us from the power, of sin. Thus only can our conduct be blameless, and our words and thoughts acceptable to God.

## PSALM XX.

**Ver. 1-9.** David probably composed this Psalm to express the prayers of the pious for his success as, at once, the head of the church and nation. Like other compositions of which David, in such relations, is the subject, its sentiments have a permanent value—the prosperity of Christ's kingdom being involved, as well as typified, in that of Israel and its king.

1. **hear thee**—graciously (Psalm 4. 1). **name of**—or, manifested perfections, as power, wisdom, etc. **defend thee**—set thee on high from danger (Psalm 9. 9; 18. 3). 2. **strengthen thee**—*sustain* in conflict; even physical benefits may be included, as courage for war, etc., as such may proceed from a sense of divine favour, secured in the use of spiritual privileges. 3. **all thy offerings**—or, gifts, vegetable offerings. **accept**—*lit., turn to ashes* (cf. 1 Kings, 18. 38). **Selah**—(Psalm 3. 2). 4. **thy counsel**—or, plan. **salvation**—that wrought and experienced by him. **set up our banners**—(Numbers, 2. 3, 10), in usual sense, or, as some render—*may we be made great*. 6. He speaks as if suddenly assured of a hearing. **his holy heaven**—or, *lit., the heavens of His holiness*, where He resides (Psalm 2. 6; 11. 4). **saving...hand**—His power which brings salvation. **His annointed**—not only David personally, but as the specially appointed head of His Church. 7. **remember**—or, cause to remember, mention thankfully, (1 Samuel, 17. 45; Psalm 33. 16). 8. **They**—*i.e.,* who trust in horses, etc. **stand upright**—*lit., we have straightened ourselves up from our distresses and fears*. 9. **let the King hear**—as God's representatives, delivered to deliver. Perhaps a better sense is, "Lord, save the king, hear us when we call," or pray.

## PSALM XXI.

**Ver. 1-13.** The pious are led by the Psalmist to celebrate God's favour to the king in the bounties already conferred and in prospective victories. The doxology added may refer to both Psalms; the preceding of petition, chiefly this of thanksgiving, ascribing honour to God for His display of grace and power to His Church in all ages, not only under David, but also under his last greatest successor, "The King of the Jews."

1. **thy strength...thy salvation**—as supplied by thee. 2. The sentiment affirmed in the first clause is reaffirmed by the negation of its opposite in the second. 3. **preventest**—*lit., to meet here in good sense, or friendship* (Psalm 59. 10), (cf. opposite, Psalm 17. 13). **blessings of**

**goodness** — which confer happiness. **crown of pure gold** — a figure for the highest royal prosperity. 4-6. (Cf. 2 Samuel, 7. 13-16). The glory and blessedness of the king as head of his line, including Christ, as well as in being God's specially selected servant, exceeded that of all others. **made him most blessed** — or, set him *to be blessings*, as Abraham, (Genesis, 12. 2). **with thy countenance** — *by sight of thee* (Psalm 16. 11), or by thy favour expressed by the light of thy countenance (Numbers, 6. 25), or both. 7. The mediate cause is the king's faith, the efficient, God's mercy. 8. The address is now made to the king. **hand** — denotes power; and — **right hand** — a more active and efficient degree of its exercise. **find out** — reach, lay hold of, indicating success in pursuit of his enemies. 9. The king is only God's agent. **anger** — *lit., face*, as appearing against them. **as a fiery oven** — as in it. 10. **fruit** — children (Psalm 37. 25; Hosea, 9. 16). 11. This terrible overthrow, reaching to posterity, is due to their crimes (Exodus, 20. 5, 6). 12. **turn their back** — *lit., place them [as to the] shoulder*. **against the face of them** — The shooting against their faces would cause them to turn their backs in flight. 13. The glory of all is ascribable to God alone.

## PSALM XXII.

**Ver. 1-31.** The obscure words *Aijeleth Shahar* in this title have various explanations. Most interpreters agree in translating them by "Hind of the morning." But great difference exists as to the meaning of these words. By some they are supposed (cf. Psalm 9.) to be the name of the tune to which the words of the Psalm were set; by others, the name of a musical instrument. Perhaps the best view is to regard the phrase as enigmatically expressive of the subject — the sufferer being likened to a hind pursued by hunters in the early morning. (*lit., the dawn of day*), — or that, while *hind* suggests the idea of a meek, innocent sufferer, the addition of morning denotes relief obtained. The feelings of a pious sufferer in sorrow and deliverance are vividly portrayed. He earnestly pleads for divine aid on the ground of his relation to God, whose past goodness to His people encourages hope, and then on account of the imminent danger by which he is threatened. The language of complaint is turned to that of rejoicing in the assured prospect of relief from suffering and triumph over his enemies. The use of the words of the first clause of *v. 1*, by our Saviour on the cross, and the quotation of *v. 18* by John, (19. 24), and of *v. 22* by Paul, (Hebrews, 2. 12), as fulfilled in His history, clearly intimate the prophetic and Messianic purport of the Psalm. The intensity of the grief, and the completeness and glory and deliverance and triumph, alike appear to be unsuitable representations of the fortunes of any less personage. In a general and modified sense, (cf. on Psalm 16.), the experience here detailed may be adapted to the case of all Christians suffering from spiritual foes, and delivered by divine aid, inasmuch as Christ, in His human nature, was their head and representative.

**I.** A summary of the complaint. Desertion by God, when overwhelmed by distress, is the climax of the sufferer's misery. **words of my roaring** — Shows that the complaint is expressed intelligently,



though the term *roaring* is figurative, taken from the conduct of irrational creatures in pain. 2. The long distress is evinced by — **am not silent** — *lit., not silence to me*, either meaning, I continually cry, or, corresponding with *thou hearest not*, or, answerest not, it may mean, there is no rest or quiet to me. 3. Still he not only refrains from charging God foolishly, but evinces his confidence in God by appealing to him. **thou art holy** — Or possessed of all attributes which encourage trust, and the right object of the praises of the Church; hence the sufferer need not despair. 4, 5. Past experience of God's people is a ground of trust. The mention of "our fathers" does not destroy the applicability of the words as the language of our Saviour's human nature. 6. He, was despised and rejected of His own people, as a disgrace to the nation, might well use these words of deep abasement which express not His real, but esteemed, value. 7, 8. For the Jews used one of the gestures, (Matthew, 27. 39), here mentioned, when taunting Him on the cross, and (*v.* 43), reproached Him almost in the very language of this passage. **trusted in the Lord** — *lit., rolled — i.e., his burden*, (Psalm 37. 5; Proverbs, 16. 3), on the Lord. This is the language of enemies sporting with his faith in the hour of his desertion. **shoot out** (or, open) **the lip** — (cf. Psalm 35. 21). 9, 10. Though ironically spoken, the exhortation to trust was well founded on his previous experience of divine aid, the special illustration of which is drawn from the period of helpless infancy. **didst make me hope** — Or, *lit., make me secure*. 11. From this statement of reasons for the appeal, he renews it, pleading his double extremity, the nearness of trouble, and the absence of a helper. 12, 13. His enemies, with the vigour of bulls and rapacity of lions, surround him, eargerly seeking his ruin. The force of both figures is greater without the use of any particle denoting comparison. 14, 15. Utter exhaustion and hopeless weakness, in these circumstances of pressing danger, are set forth by the most expressive figures, the *solidity* of the body is destroyed, and becomes like water; the bones are parted; the heart, the very seat of vitality, melts like wax; all the juices of the system are dried up; the tongue can no longer perform its office, but lies parched and stiffened (cf. Genesis, 49. 4; 2 Samuel, 14. 14; Psalm 58. 8). In this, God is regarded as the ultimate source, and men as the instruments. **the dust of death** — Of course denotes the grave. We need not try to find the exact counterpart of each item of the description in the particulars of our Saviour's sufferings. Figurative language resembles pictures of historical scences, presenting substantial truth, under illustrations, which, though not essential to the facts, are not inconsistent with them. Were any portion of Christ's terrible sufferings specially designed, it was doubtless that of the garden of Gethsemane. 16. Evil-doers are well described as dogs, which, in the East, herding together, wild and rapacious, are justly objects of great abhorrence. The last clause has been a subject of much discussion, (involving questions as to the genuineness of the *Hebrew* word translated *pierce*), which cannot be made intelligible to the English reader. Though not quoted in the New Testament, the remarkable aptness of the description to the facts of the Saviour's history, together with difficulties attending any other mode of explaining the clause in the *Hebrew*, justify an adherence to the terms of our version

and their obvious meaning. 17. His emaciated frame, itself an item of his misery, is rendered more so, as the object of delighted contemplation to his enemies. The verbs, *look* and *stare*, often occur as suggestive of feelings of satisfaction (cf. Psalm 27. 13; 54. 7; 118. 7). 18. This literally fulfilled prediction closes the sad picture of the exposed and deserted sufferer. 19, 20. He now turns with unabated desire and trust to God, who, in His strength and faithfulness, is contrasted with the urgent dangers described. **my soul** — Or, self (cf. Psalm 3. 2; 16. 10). **my darling** — *Lit.*, *my only one*, or, *solitary one*, as desolate and afflicted (Psalm 25. 16; 35. 17). 21. Deliverance pled in view of former help, when the most imminent danger, from the most powerful enemy, represented by the unicorn or wild buffalo. **the lion's mouth** — (cf. *v.* 13). The lion often used as a figure representing violent enemies; the connecting of the *mouth* intimates their rapacity. 22-24. He declares his purpose to celebrate God's gracious dealings and publish His manifested perfections (name, Psalm 5. 11), etc., and forthwith invites the pious, those who have a reverential fear of God, to unite in special praise for a deliverance, illustrating God's kind regard for the lowly, whom men neglect. *To hide the face* or *eyes* expresses a studied neglect of one's cause, and refusal of aid or sympathy (cf. Psalm 30. 7; Isaiah, 1. 15). 25, 26. **my praise shall be of thee** — or, perhaps better, *from thee* — *i.e.*, God gives grace to praise him. With offering praise, he farther evinces his gratitude, by promising the payment of his vows, in celebrating the usual festival, as provided in the law, (Deuteronomy, 12. 18; 16. 11), of which, the pious or humble, and they that seek the Lord, His true worshippers, shall partake abundantly, and join him in praise. In the enthusiasm produced by his lively feelings, he addresses such in words, assuring them of God's perpetual favour. *The dying of the heart* denotes death (1 Samuel, 25, 37); so its living denotes life. 27-31. His case illustrates God's righteous government. Beyond the existing time and people, others shall be brought to acknowledge and worship God; the *fat ones*, or the rich as well as the poor, the helpless who cannot keep themselves alive, shall together unite in celebrating God's delivering power, and transmit to unborn people the records of His grace. **it shall be accounted to the Lord for, etc.** — Or, it shall be told of the Lord to a generation. God's wonderful words shall be told from generation to generation. **that he hath done** — Supply *it*, or *this* — *i.e.*, what the Psalm has unfolded.

### PSALM XXIII.

**Ver. 1-6.** Under a metaphor borrowed from scenes of pastoral life with which David was familiar, he describes God's providential care in providing refreshment, guidance, protection, and abundance, and so affording grounds of confidence in His perpetual favour.

1. Christ's relation to His people is often represented by the figure of a shepherd (John, 10. 14; Hebrews, 13. 20; 1 Peter, 2. 25; 5. 4), and therefore the opinion that He is *the Lord* here so described, and in Genesis, 48. 15; Psalm 80. 1; Isaiah, 40. 11, is not without some good reason. 2. **green pastures** — Or, pastures of the tender grass, are

mentioned, not in respect to food, but as places of cool and refreshing rest. **the still waters** — Are, *lit.*, *waters of stillness*, whose quiet flow invite to repose. They are contrasted with boisterous streams on the one hand, and stagnant, offensive pools on the other. 3. To restore the soul is to revive or quicken it (Psalm 19. 7), or relieve it (Lamentations, 1. 11, 19). **paths of righteousness** — Those of safety, as directed by God, and pleasing to Him. **for his name's sake** — Or, regard for His perfections, pledged for His people's welfare. 4. In the darkest and most trying hour God is near. **the valley of the shadow of death** — Is a ravine overhung by high precipitous cliffs, filled with dense forests, and well calculated to inspire dread to the timid, and a covert to beasts of prey. While expressive of any great danger or cause of terror, it does not exclude the greatest of all, to which it is most popularly applied, and which its terms suggest. **thy rod and thy staff** — Are symbols of a shepherd's office. By them he guides his sheep. 5, 6. Another figure expresses God's provident care. **a table** — or, food, anointing **oil** — the symbol of gladness, and the overflowing **cup** — which represents abundance — are prepared for the child of God, who may feast in spite of his enemies, confident that this favour will ever attend him. This beautiful Psalm most admirably sets before us, in its chief figure, that of a shepherd, the gentle, kind, and sure care extended to God's people, who, as a shepherd, both *rules and feeds them*. The closing verse shows that the blessings mentioned are spiritual.

## PSALM XXIV.

**Ver. 1-10.** God's supreme sovereignty requires a befitting holiness of life and heart in His worshippers: a sentiment sublimely illustrated by describing His entrance into the sanctuary, by the symbol of His worship — the ark, as requiring the most profound homage to the glory of His Majesty.

**1. fullness** — every thing. **world** — the habitable globe, with, **they that dwell** — forming a parallel expression to the first clause. 2. poetically represents the facts of Genesis, 1. 9. 3, 4. The form of a question gives vivacity. *Hands, tongue, and heart* are organs of action, speech, and feeling, which compose character. **lifted up his soul** — is to set the affections (Psalm 25. 1) on an object; here, **vanity** — or, any false thing, of which swearing falsely, or *to falsehood*, is a specification. **hill of the Lord** (cf. Psalm 2. 6, etc.). **His church** — the true or invisible, as typified by the earthly sanctuary. 5. **righteousness** — the rewards which God bestows on His people, or the grace to secure those rewards as well as the result. 6. **Jacob** — by "Jacob," we may understand God's people (cf. Isaiah, 43. 22; 44. 2, etc.), corresponding to "the generation," etc., as if he had said, "those who seek thy face are thy chosen people." 7-10. The entrance of the ark, with the attending procession, into the holy sanctuary is pictured to us. The repetition of the terms give emphasis. **Lord of hosts** — or fully, *Lord God of hosts* (Hosea, 12. 5; Amos, 4. 13), describes God by a title indicative of supremacy over all creatures, and especially the heavenly armies (Joshua, 5. 14; 1 Kings, 22. 19). Whether, as some think, the actual enlargement of

the ancient gates of Jerusalem be the basis of the figure, the effect of the whole is to impress us with a conception of the matchless majesty of God.

## PSALM XXV.

**Ver. 1-22.** The general tone of this Psalm is that of prayer for help from enemies. Distress, however, exciting a sense of sin, humble confession, supplication for pardon, preservation from sin, and divine guidance, are prominent topics.

1. **lift up my soul** — (Psalm 24. 4; 86. 4), set my affections (cf. Colossians, 3. 2). 2. **not be ashamed** — by disappointment of hopes of relief. 3. The prayer generalized as to all who *wait on God* — *i.e.*, who expect His favour. On the other hand, the disappointment of the perfidious, who, unprovoked, have done evil, is invoked (cf. 2 Samuel, 22. 29). 4, 5. On the ground of former favour, he invokes divine guidance, according to God's gracious ways of dealing and faithfulness. 6, 7. Confessing past and present sins, he pleads for mercy, not on palliations of sin, but on God's well-known benevolence. 8, 9. **upright** — acting according to His promise. **sinners** — the general term, limited by the **meek** — who are *penitent*. **in judgment** — rightly. **the way — and his way** — God's ways of providence. 10. **paths** — similar sense — His modes of dealing (cf. v. 4). **mercy and truth** — (Job, 14.), God's grace in promising and faithfulness in performing. 11. God's perfections of love, mercy, goodness, and truth are manifested (*his name*, cf. Psalm 9. 10), in pardoning sin, and the greatness of sin renders pardon more needed. 12, 13. What he asks for himself is the common lot of all the pious. The phrase — **inherit the earth** — (cf. Matthew, 5. 5), alluding to the promise of Canaan, expresses all the blessings included in that promise, temporal as well as spiritual. 14. The reason of the blessing explained — the pious enjoy communion with God (cf. Proverbs, 3. 21, 22), and, of course, learn His gracious terms of pardon. 15. His trust in God is fixed. **net** — is frequently used as a figure for dangers by enemies (Psalm 9. 15; 10. 9). 16-19. A series of earnest appeals for aid, because God had seemed to desert him (cf. Psalm 13. 1; 17. 13, etc.), his sins oppressed him, his enemies had enlarged his troubles and were multiplied, increasing in hate and violence (Psalm 9. 8; 18. 48). 20. **keep my soul** — (Psalm 16. 1). **put my trust** — flee for refuge (Psalm 2. 12). 21. In conscious innocence of the faults charged by his enemies, he confidently commits his cause to God. Some refer — **integrity, etc.** — to God, meaning His covenant faithfulness. This sense, though good, is an unusual application of the terms. 22. Extend these blessings to all thy people in all their distresses.

## PSALM XXVI.

**Ver. 1-12.** After appealing to God's judgment on his avowed integrity and innocence of the charges laid by his enemies, the Psalmist professes delight in God's worship, and prays for exemption from the **fate** of the wicked, expressing assurance of God's favour.

**1. Judge**—decide on my case—the appeal of innocence. **in mine integrity**—freedom from blemish (cf. Psalm 25. 21). His confidence of perseverance results from trust in God's sustaining grace. **2.** He asks the most careful scrutiny of his affections and thoughts (Psalm 7. 9), or motives. **3.** As often, the ground of prayer for present help is former favour. **4-8.** As exemplified by the fruits of divine grace, presented in his life, especially in his avoiding the wicked and his purposes of cleaving to God's worship. **wash mine hands**—expressive symbol of freedom from sinful acts (cf. Matthew, 27. 24). **the habitation of thy house**—where thy house rests—as the tabernacle was not yet permanently fixed. **honour dwelleth**—conveys an allusion to the Holy of Holies. **9. gather not, etc.**—bring me not to death, **bloody men**—(cf. Psalm 5. 6). **10.** Their whole conduct is that of violence and fraud. **11, 12. But, etc.**—He contrasts his character and destiny with that of the wicked (cf. *v.* 1, 2). **even place**—free from occasions of stumbling—safety in his course is denoted. Hence he will render to God his praise publicly.

## - PSALM XXVII.

**Ver. 1-14.** With a general strain of confidence, hope, and joy, especially in God's worship, in the midst of dangers, the Psalmist introduces prayer for divine help and guidance.

**1. light**—is a common figure for comfort. **strength**—or, stronghold—affording security against all violence. The interrogations give greater vividness to the negation implied. **2. eat...my flesh**—(Job, 19. 22; Psalm 14. 4). The allusion to wild beasts illustrates their rapacity. **they stumbled**—“they” is emphatic; *not I*, but *they* were destroyed. **3.** In the greatest dangers. **in this**—*i.e.*, then, in such extremity. **4, 5.** The secret of his confidence is his delight in communion with God (Psalm 16. 11; 23. 6), beholding the harmony of His perfections, and seeking His favour in His temple or *palace*; a term applicable to the tabernacle (cf. Psalm 5. 7). There he is safe (Psalm 31. 21; 61. 5). The figure is changed in the last clause, but the sentiment is the same. **6. head be lifted up**—I shall be placed beyond the reach of my enemies. Hence he avows his purpose of rendering joyful thank-offerings. **7.** Still pressing need extorts prayer for help. **cry with my voice**—denotes earnestness. Other things equal, Christians in earnest pray audibly, even in secret. **8.** The meaning is clear, though the construction in a literal translation is obscure. The *English Version* supplies the implied cause. To *seek God's face* is to seek His favour (Psalm 105. 4). **9. hide not, etc.**—(Psalm 4. 6; 22. 24). Against rejection he pleads former mercy and love. **10.** In the extremity of earthly destitution (Psalm 31. 11; 38. 11), God provides (cf. Matthew, 25. 35). **11. thy way**—of providence. **a plain path**—(Psalm 26. 12). **enemies**—*lit.*, *watchers for my fall* (Psalm 5. 8). **12. will**—*lit.*, *soul desire* (Psalm 35. 25). **enemies**—*lit.*, *oppressors*. Falsehood aids cruelty against him. **breathe out**—as being filled with it (Acts, 9. 1). **13.** The strong emotion is indicated by the incomplete sentence, for which the *English Version* supplies a proper clause; or, omitting that, and

rendering, *yet I believed*, etc., the contrast of his faith and his danger is expressed. **to see** — is to experience (Psalm 22. 17). 14. **wait, etc.** — in confident expectation. The last clause is, *lit., and wait, etc.*, as if expecting new measures of help.

## PSALM XXVIII.

**Ver. 1-9.** An earnest cry for divine aid against his enemies, as being also those of God, is followed by the Psalmist's praise in assurance of a favourable answer, and a prayer for all God's people.

1. **my rock** — (Psalm 18. 2, 31). **be not silent to me** — *lit., from me*, deaf or inattentive. **become like them, etc.** — share their fate. **go down into the pit** — or, grave (Psalm 30. 3). 2. **lift up my hands** — a gesture of prayer (Psalm 63. 4; 141. 2). **oracle** — place of *speaking* (Exodus, 25. 2; Numbers, 7. 89), where God answered His people (cf. Psalm 5. 7). 3. **Draw me not, etc.** — implies punishment as well as death (cf. Psalm 26. 9). Hypocrisy is the special *wickedness* mentioned. 4. The imprecation is justified in *v.* 5. The force of the passage is greatly enhanced by the accumulation of terms describing their sin. **endeavours** — points out their deliberate sinfulness. 5. Disregard of God's judgments brings a righteous punishment. **destroy... build... up** — The positive strengthened by the negative form. 6. **supplications** — or, cries for mercy. 7. The repetition of heart denotes his sincerity. 8. The distinction made between the people. **their strength** — and the **anointed** — may indicate Absalom's rebellion as the occasion. 9. The special prayer for the people sustains the view. **feed them** — as a shepherd (Psalm 23. 1, etc).

## PSALM XXIX.

**Ver. 1-11.** Trust in God is encouraged by the celebration of His mighty power as illustrated in His dominion over the natural world, in some of its most terrible and wonderful exhibitions.

1. **Give** — or, ascribe (Deuteronomy, 32. 3). **mighty** — or, sons of the mighty (Psalm 89. 6). Heavenly beings as angels. 2. **name** — as (Psalm 5, 11; 8. 1). **beauty of holiness** — the loveliness of a spiritual worship, of which the perceptible beauty of the sanctuary worship was but a type. 3. **The voice of the Lord** — audible exhibition of His power in the tempest, of which thunder is a specimen, but not the uniform or sole example. **the waters** — are the clouds or vapours (Psalm 18. 11; Jeremiah, 10. 13). 4. **powerful... majesty** — *lit., in power, in majesty*. 5, 6. The tall and large cedars, especially of Lebanon, are *shivered*, utterly broken. The waving of the mountain forests before the wind is expressed by the figure of skipping or leaping. 7. **divideth** — *lit., hews off*. The lightning, like flakes and splinters, hewed from stone or wood, flies through the air. 8. **the wilderness** — especially Kadesh, south of Judea, is selected as another scene of this display of divine power, as a vast and desolate region impresses the mind, like mountains, with images of grandeur. 9. Terror-stricken animals and denuded forests close the illustration. In view of this scene of awful sublimity,

God's worshippers respond to the call of *v.* 2, and speak or cry, "glory!" By temple, or palace (God's residence, Psalm 5. 7), may here be meant, heaven, or the whole frame of nature, as the angels are called on for praise. 10, 11. Over this terrible raging of the elements God is enthroned, directing and restraining by sovereign power; and hence the comfort of His people. "This awful God is ours, our Father, and our Love."

## PSALM XXX.

**Ver. 1-12.** *Lit., A Psalm-song* — a composition to be sung with musical instruments, or without them — or, "*Song of the dedication,*" etc., specifying the particular character of the Psalm. Some suppose that "*of David*" should be connected with the name of the composition, and not with "*house,*" and refer for the occasion to the selection of a site for the temple (1 Chronicles, 21. 26-30; 22. 1). But "*house*" is never used absolutely for the temple, and *dedication* does not well apply to such an occasion. Though the phrase in the *Hebrew*, "dedication of the house of David," is an unusual form; yet it is equally unusual to disconnect the name of the author and the composition. As a "dedication of David's house" (as provided, Deuteronomy, 20. 5), the scope of the Psalm well corresponds with the state of repose and meditation on his past trials, suited to such an occasion (2 Samuel, 5. 11; 7. 2). For beginning with a celebration of God's delivering favour in which he invites others to join, he relates his prayer in distress, and God's gracious and prompt answer.

**1. lifted me up** — as one is drawn from a well (Psalm 40. 2), **2. healeth me** — affliction is often described as disease (Psalm 6. 2; 41. 4; 107. 20), and so relief by healing. **3.** The terms describe extreme danger. **soul** — or, myself. **grave** — *lit., hell* as in Psalm 16. 10. **hast kept me . . . pit** — quickened or revived me from the state of dying (cf. Psalm 28. 1). **4. remembrance** — the thing remembered or memorial. **holiness** — as the sum of God's perfections (cf. Psalm 22. 3), used as *name* (Exodus, 3. 15; Psalm 135. 13). **5.** Relatively, the longest experience of divine anger by the pious is momentary. These precious words have consoled millions. **6, 7.** What particular prosperity is meant we do not know. Perhaps his accession to the throne. In his self-complacent elation he was checked by God's *hiding His face* (cf. Psalm 22. 24; 27. 9). **troubled** — confounded with fear (Psalm 2. 5). **8-11.** As in Psalm 6. 5; 88. 10; Isaiah, 38. 18, the appeal for mercy is based on the destruction of his agency in praising God here, which death would produce. The terms expressing relief are poetical, and not to be pressed, though *dancing* is the translation of a word which means a *lute*, whose cheerful notes are contrasted with *mourning*, or, (Amos, 5. 16) wailing. **sackcloth** — was used, even by kings, in distress (1 Chronicles, 21. 16; Isaiah, 37. 1); but *gladness*, used for a garment, shows the language to be figurative. **12.** Though — **my** — is supplied before — **glory** — it is better as Psalm 16. 10, to receive it as used for *tongue*, the organ of praise. The ultimate end of God's mercies to us is our praise to **Him**.

## PSALM XXXI.

**Ver. 1-24.** The prayer of a believer in time of deep distress. In the first part cries for help are mingled with expressions of confidence. Then the detail of griefs engrosses his attention, till, in the assurance of strong but submissive faith, he rises to the language of unmingled joyful trust, and exhorts others to like love and confidence toward God.

1. expresses the general tone of feeling of the Psalm. 2-4. He seeks help in God's righteous government (Psalm 5. 8), and begs for an attentive hearing, and speedy and effectual aid. With no other help and no claim of merit, he relies solely on God's regard to his own perfections for a safe guidance and release from the snares of his enemies. On the terms "*rocks*," etc., (cf. Psalm 17. 2; 18. 2, 50; 20. 6; 23. 3; 26. 1). 5, 6. **commit my spirit**—my life, or, myself. Our Saviour used the words on the cross, not as prophetic, but, as many pious men have done, as expressive of his unshaken confidence in God. The Psalmist rests on God's faithfulness to His promises to His people, and hence avows himself one of them, detesting all who revere objects of idolatry (cf. Deuteronomy, 32. 21; 1 Corinthians, 8. 4). 7. **hast known my soul, etc.**—had regard to me in trouble. 8. **shut me up . . . enemy**—abandon to (1 Samuel, 23. 11). **large room**—place of safety (cf. Psalm 18. 19). 9, 10. **mine eye, etc.**—denotes extreme weakness (cf. Psalm 6. 7). **grief**—mingled sorrow and indignation (Psalm 6. 7). **soul and . . . belly**—the whole person. Though the effects ascribed to grief are not mere figures of speech. **spent . . . consumed**—must be taken in the modified sense of *wasted* and *decayed*. **iniquity**—or, suffering by it (cf. on Psalm 40. 12). 11. **among**—or, *lit.*, *from*, or, *by* my enemies. The latter cases describe the progress of his disgrace to the lowest degree, till, 12, he is forgotten as one dead, and contemned as a useless broken vessel. 13. **For**—introduces farther reasons for his prayer, the unjust, deliberate, and murderous purposes of his foes. 14-18. In his profession of trust he includes the terms of the prayer expressing it. **times**—course of life. **deliver . . . hand**—opposed to "*shut me up*," etc., of v. 8. **make . . . shine**—(cf. Numbers, 6. 25; Psalm 4. 6.) Deprecating from himself, he imprecates on the wicked, God's displeasure, and prays that their virulent persecution of him may be stopped. 19-21. God displays openly His purposed goodness to His people. **the secret of thy presence**—or, *covering* of thy countenance: the protection He thus affords; cf. Psalm 27. 5, for a similar figure; "*dwelling*" used there for "*presence*" here. The idea of security farther presented by the figure of a tent and a fortified city. 22. **For I said**—*lit.*, *And I said*, in an adversative sense. I, thus favoured, was despondent. **in my haste**—in my terror. **cut off . . . eyes**—from all the protection of thy presence. 23, 24. **the Lord . . . proud doer**—*lit.*, *the Lord is keeping faith*—*i.e.*, with His people, and is repaying, etc. Then let none despair, **but take courage**, their hopes shall not be in vain.



## PSALM XXXII.

**Ver. 1-11.** *Maschil* — *lit., giving instruction.* The Psalmist describes the blessings of His forgiveness, succeeding the pains of conviction, and deduces from his own experience instruction and exhortation to others.

**1, 2.** (Cf. Roman, 4. 6). **forgiven** — *lit., taken away*, opposed to *retain* (John, 20. 23). **covered** — so that God no longer regards the sin (Psalm 85. 3). **imputeth** — charge to him, and treat him accordingly. **no guile** — or, *deceit*, no false estimate of himself, nor insincerity before God (cf. Romans, 8. 1). **3, 4.** A vivid description of felt, but unacknowledged, sin. **when** — *lit., for*, as *v. 4.* **thy hand** — of God, or, power in distressing him (Psalm 28. 2). **moisture** — vital juices of the body, the parching heat of which expresses the anguish of the soul. On the other figures, cf. Psalm 6. 2, 7; 31. 9-11. If composed on the occasion of the fifty-first Psalm, this distress may have been protracted for several months. **5.** A prompt fulfilment of the purposed confession is followed by a prompt forgiveness. **6. For this** — *i.e.*, my happy experience. **godly** — pious in the sense of Psalm 4. 3. **a time** — (Isaiah, 55. 6), when God's Spirit inclines us to seek pardon, He is ready to forgive. **floods, etc.** — denote great danger (Psalm 18. 17; 66. 12). **7.** His experience illustrates the statement of *v. 6.* **8.** Whether, as most likely, the language of David (cf. Psalm 51. 13), or that of God, this is a promise of divine guidance. **I will . . . mine eye** — or, *my eye shall be on thee, watching and directing thy way.* **9.** The latter clause, more literally, "*in that they come not near thee*" — *i.e.*, *because they will not come, etc.*, unless forced by bit and bridle. **10.** The sorrows of the impenitent contrasted with the peace and safety secured by God's mercy. **11.** The righteous and upright, or those conforming to the divine teaching for securing the divine blessing, may well rejoice with shouting.

## PSALM XXXIII.

**Ver. 1-22.** A call to lively and joyous praise to God for His glorious attributes and works, as displayed in creation and His general and special providence, in view of which the Psalmist, for all the pious, professes trust and joy, and invokes God's mercy.

**1-3.** The sentiment falls in with Psalm 32. 11 (cf. 1 Corinthians, 14 15). The instruments (Psalm 92. 3; 144. 9), do not exclude the voice. **a new song** — fresh, adapted to the occasion (Psalm 40. 3; 96. 1). **play skilfully** — (cf. Psalm 15. 16, 21). **4-9.** Reasons for praise, first, God's truth, faithfulness, and mercy, generally; then, His creative power which all must honour. In **word** and **breath** — or, *spirit*, there may be an allusion to the Son (John, 1. 1) and Holy Spirit. **he spake** — *lit., said.* **it was** — the addition of *done* weakens the sense (cf. Genesis, 1. 3-10). **10, 11.** In God's providence He thwarts men's purposes and executes His own. **heathen** — *lit., nations.* **12-19.** The inference from the foregoing in *v. 12*, is illustrated by God's special providence, underlying which is His minute knowledge of all men. **looketh** — intently

(Isaiah, 14. 16). **fashioneth** — or, forms, and hence knows and controls (Proverbs, 21. 1). **alike** — *without exception*. **considereth** — or, understands, God knows men's motives. 16, 17. Men's usual reliances in their greatest exigencies are, in themselves, useless. *On the war horse* (cf. Job, 39. 19-25). **a vain thing** — a lie, which deceives us. 18, 19. Contrasted is God's guidance and power to save from the greatest earthly evil and its most painful precursor, and hence from all. 20, 22. **waiteth** in earnest expectation. **holy name** — (cf. Psalm 5. 12; 22. 22; 30. 4). Our faith measures mercy (Matthew, 9. 29), and if of grace, it is no more of debt (Romans, 11. 6).

## PSALM XXXIV.

**Ver. 1-22.** On the title cf. 1 Samuel, 21. 13. Abimelech was the general name of the sovereign (Gen. 20. 2). After celebrating God's gracious dealings with him, the Psalmist exhorts others to make trial of His providential care, instructing them how to secure it. He then contrasts God's care of His people and His punitive providence towards the wicked.

**1-4.** Even in distress, which excites supplication, there is always matter for praising and thanking God (cf. Ephesians, 5. 20; Phillippians, 4. 6). **make her boast** — glory (Psalm 105. 3; cf. Galatians, 6. 14). **humble** — the pious, as Psalm 9. 12; 25. 9. **magnify the Lord** — ascribe greatness to Him, an act of praise. **together** — alike (Psalm 33. 15). or, equally, without exception, **delivered**. **fears** — as well as actual evil (Psalm 64. 1). 5-7. God's favor to the pious generally, and to himself specially, is celebrated. **looked** — with desire for help. **lightened** — or, brightened, expressing joy, opposed to the downcast features of those who are ashamed or disappointed (Psalm 25. 2. 3). **This poor man** — *lit.*, *humble*; himself as a specimen of such angel — of the covenant (Isaiah, 63. 9), of whom as a leader of God's host (Joshua, 5. 14; 1 Kings, 22. 19), the phrase — **encampeth etc.** — is appropriate; or *angel*, used collectively for angels (Hebrews, 1. 14). 8. **taste and see** — try and experience. 9. Those **fear him** — who are pious — fear and love (Proverbs, 1. 7; 9. 10). **saints** — consecrated to His service (Isaiah, 40. 31). 10. not want **any good** — "Good" is emphatic: they may be afflicted (cf. *v.* 10); but this may be a *good* (2 Corinthians, 4. 17, 18; Hebrews, 12. 10, 12). 11. **children** — subjects of instruction (Proverbs, 1. 8, 10). 12. **What man** — whoever desires the blessings of piety let him attend. 13. 14. Sins of thought included in those of speech (Luke, 6. 45), avoiding evil and doing good in our relations to men are based on a right relation to God. 15. **eyes of the Lord are upon** — (Psalm 32. 8; 33. 18). 16. **face**.. **against** — *opposed* to them (Leviticus, 17. 10; 20. 3). **cut off the remembrance** — utterly destroy, (Psalm 109. 13). 17, 18. Humble penitents are objects of God's special tender regard (Psalm 51. 19; Isaiah, 67. 15). 20. **bones** — frame-work of the body. 21. 22. Contrast in the destiny of righteous and wicked, the former shall be delivered and never come into condemnation (John, 5. 24; Romans, 8. 1), the latter left under condemnation and desolate.

## PSALM XXXV.

**Ver. 1-28.** The Psalmist invokes God's aid, contrasting the hypocrisy, cunning, and malice of his enemies with his integrity and generosity. The imprecations of the first part including a brief notice of their conduct, the fuller exposition of their hypocrisy and malice in the second, and the earnest prayer for deliverance from their scornful triumph in the last, are each closed (*v.* 9, 10, 18, 27, 28), with promises of praise for the desired relief in which his friends will unite. The historical occasion is probably 1 Samuel, 24.

**1-3.** God is invoked in the character of a warrior (Exodus, 15. 3; Deuteronomy, 32. 41). **fight against** — *Lit., devour my devourers.* **stop the way against** — *Lit., shut up* (the way), to meet or oppose, etc. **I...thy salvation** — Who saves thee. 4. (Cf. Psalm 9. 17) **devise my hurt** — Purpose for evil to me. 5, 6. — (Cf. Psalm 1. 4), — a terrible fate; driven by wind on a slippery path in darkness, and hotly pursued by supernatural violence (2 Samuel, 24. 16; Acts, 12. 23). 7, 8. **net in a pit** — or, pit of their net — or, net pit — as holy hill for hill of holiness — Psalm 2. 6), — a figure from hunting (Psalm 7. 15). These imprecations on impenitent rebels against God need no vindication: His justice and wrath are for such; His mercy for penitents. Cf. Psalm 7. 16; 11. 5, on the peculiar fate of the wicked here noticed. 9, 10. **all my bones** — Every part. **him that spoileth him** — (cf. Psalm 10. 2). 11. **false witnesses** — *Lit., Witnesses of injustice and cruelty* (cf. Psalm 11. 5; 25. 19). 12-14. Though they rendered evil for good, he showed a tender sympathy in their affliction. **spoiling** — *Lit., bereavement.* The usual modes of showing grief are made, as figures, to express his sorrow. **prayer...bosom** — may denote either the posture — (cf. 1 Kings, 18. 42) — or, that the prayer was in secret. Some think there is a reference to the result — the prayer would benefit him if not them. **behaved** — *Lit., went on* — denoting his habit. **heavily** — Or, *squalidly*, his sorrow occasioning neglect of his person. Altogether, his grief was that of one for a dearly loved relative. 15, 16. On the contrary, they rejoiced in his affliction. *Halting*, or lameness, as Psalm 38. 17, for any distress. **abjects** — Either as cripples (cf. 2 Samuel, 4. 4), contemptible; or, degraded persons, such as had been beaten (cf. Job, 30. 1-8). **I knew it not** — either the persons, or, reasons of such conduct. **tear me, and ceased not** — *lit., were not silent* — showing that the *tearing* meant slandering. **mockers** — Who are hired to make sport at feasts (Proverbs, 28. 21). 17. **darling** — (cf. Psalm 22. 20, 21). 18. (Cf. Psalm 22. 22). 19. **enemies wrongfully** — By false and slanderous imputations. **wink with the eye** — An insulting gesture (Proverbs, 6. 13). **without cause** — Manifests more malice than having a wrong cause. 20. **deceitful matters** — Or, words of deceit. **quiet in the land** — The pious lovers of peace. 21. On the gesture cf. Psalm 22. 7, and on the expressions of malicious triumph cf. Psalm 10. 13; 28. 3. 23, 24. (Cf. Psalm 7. 6; 26. 1; 2 Thessalonians, 1. 6). God's righteous government is the hope of the pious and terror of the wicked. 25. **swallowed him up** — Utterly destroyed him (Psalm 21. 9; Lamentations, 2. 16). 26. **clothed** — Covered wholly (Job, 8. 22). 27. **favour**

...**cause** — Delight in it, as vindicated by thee. **let the Lord, etc.** — Let Him be greatly praised for His care of the just. 28. In this praise of God's equitable government (Psalm 5. 8), the writer promises ever to engage.

## PSALM XXXVI.

**Ver. 1-12.** On servant of the Lord cf. title Psalm 18. The wickedness of man contrasted with the excellency of God's perfection and dispensations; and the benefit of the latter sought, and the evils of the former deprecated.

1. The general sense of this difficult verse is, "that the wicked have no fear of God." The first clause may be rendered, "Saith transgression in my heart, in respect to the wicked, there is no fear," etc., *i.e.*, such is my reflection on men's transgressions. 2-4. This reflection detailed. **until his iniquity, etc.** — *lit.*, for finding his iniquity for hating; *i.e.*, he persuades himself God will not so find it — "for hating" involving the idea of punishing. Hence his words of *iniquity* and *deceit*, and his bold rejection of all right principles of conduct. The climax is that he deliberately adopts and patronises evil. The negative forms affirm more emphatically the contraries. 5, 6. **mercy...and...faithfulness** — As mercy and truth (Psalm 25. 10). **righteousness** and **judgments** — Qualities of a good government (Psalm 5. 8; 31. 1). These are all set forth, by the figures used, as unbounded. 7. **shadow of thy wings** — (cf. Deuteronomy, 32. 11; Psalm 91. 1). **fatness** — richness. **thy house** — residence — for the privileges and blessings of communion with God (Psalm 23. 6; 27. 4). **rivers of thy pleasures** — plenteous supply — may allude to Eden. 9. Light is an emblem of all blessings — given of God as a means to gain more. 10. **that know thee** — Right knowledge of God is a source of right affections and conduct. 11. **foot of...hand...wicked** — All kinds of violent dealing. 12. **there** — In the acting of violence, they are overthrown. A signal defeat.

## PSALM XXXVII.

**Ver. 1-40.** A composed and uniform trust in God, and a constant course of integrity, are urged in view of the blessedness of the truly pious, contrasted in various aspects with the final ruin of the wicked. Thus the wisdom and justice of God's providence are vindicated, and its seeming inequalities, which excite the cavils of the wicked and the distrust of the pious, are explained. David's personal history abundantly illustrates the Psalm.

1, 2. The general sentiment of the whole Psalm is expressed. The righteous need not be vexed by the prosperity of the wicked; for it is transient, and their destiny undesirable. 3. **trust** — sure of safety. **shalt thou dwell** — or, dwell thou — repose quietly. **verily...fed** — or, *feed on truth* — God's promise (Psalm 36. 5; cf. Hosea, 12. 1). 4. **desires** — (Psalm 20. 5; 21. 2), what is lawful and right, really good (Psalm 84. 11). 5. **commit thy way** — (Proverbs, 16. 3). *Works* — what you have to do and cannot — set forth as a burden. **trust...**

**in . . . him** — *Lit., on Him.* He will do what you cannot (cf. Psalm 22. 8 ; 31. 6). He will not suffer your character to remain under suspicion. 7, 8. **rest in** — *Lit., Be silent to the Lord.* **and wait** — be submissive — avoid petulance and murmurings, anger and rash doing. 9. Two reasons. The prosperity of the wicked is short, and the pious, by humble trust, will secure all covenant blessings, denoted here, by "inherit the earth" (cf. Psalm 25. 13). 10, 11. **shall not be** — *lit., is not* — is not to be found. **peace** — includes prosperity. 12. **gnasheth . . . teeth** — in beastly rage. 13. (Cf. Psalm 2. 4). **sceth** — knows certainly. **his day** — of punishment, long delayed, shall yet come (Hebrews, 10. 37). 14, 15. **sword . . . and . . . bow** — for any instruments of violence. **slay** — *lit., slaughter* (1 Samuel, 25. 11). **poor and needy** — God's people (Psalm 10. 17 ; 12. 5). The punishment of the wicked as drawn on themselves — often mentioned (cf. Psalm 7. 15, 16 ; 35. 8). 16. **riches** — *lit., noise and tumult*, as incidental to much wealth (cf. Psalm 39. 6). Thus the contrast with the "little" of one man is more vivid. 17. Even the members of the body needed to hold weapons are destroyed. 18, 19. God, who knows his people's changes, provides against evil, and supplies all their need. 20. While the wicked, however mighty, are destroyed, and that utterly, as smoke which vanishes and leaves no trace. 21, 22. **payeth not** — not able ; having grown poor (cf. Deuteronomy, 15. 7). Ability of the one and inability of the other do not exclude moral dispositions. God's blessing or cursing makes the difference. **cut of** — opposed to "inherit the earth" (cf. Leviticus, 7. 20, 21). 23, 24. **steps** — way, or, course of life ; as ordered by God, failures will not be permanent. 25, 26. **his seed is blessed** — *lit., for a blessing* (Genesis, 12. 2 ; Psalm 21. 6). The position is still true as the rule of God's economy (1 Timothy, 4. 8 ; 6. 6). 27-29. The exhortation is sustained by the assurance of God's essential rectitude in that providential government, which provides perpetual blessings for the good, and perpetual misery for the wicked. 30, 31. The righteous described as to the elements of character, thought, word, and action. **steps** — or, goings — for conduct which is unwavering (Psalm 18. 36). 32, 33. The devices of the wicked against the good fail, because God acquits them. 34. On the contrary, the good are not only blessed, but made to see the ruin of their foes. 35, 36. Of which a picture is given, under the figure of a flourishing tree (cf. *Margin*), which soon withers. **he was not** — (cf. *v.* 10.). 37. By *the end* is meant reward (Proverbs, 23. 18 ; 24. 14), or expectation of success, as *v.* 38, which describes the *end of the wicked* in contrast, and that is *cut off* (cf. Psalm 73. 17). 38. **together** — at once — entirely (Psalm 4. 8). 39, 40. **strength** — (Psalm 27. 1 ; 28. 8). **trouble** — straits (Psalm 9. 9 ; 10. 1). In trust and quietness is the salvation of the pious from all foes and all their devices.

## PSALM XXXVIII.

**Vers. 1-22.** *To bring to remembrance, or, remind* God of His mercy and himself of his sin. Appealing to God for relief from his heavy chastisement, the Psalmist avows his integrity before men, complains of the defection of friends and persecution of enemies, and in a submis-

sive spirit, casting himself on God, with penitent confession, he pleads God's covenant relation and his innocence of the charges of his enemies, and prays for divine comfort and help.

1-4. He deprecates deserved punishment, which is described (Psalm 6. 1,) under the figure of bodily disease. **arrows... and thy hand**—the sharp and heavy afflictions he suffered (Deuteronomy, 22. 23). **iniquities**—afflictions in punishment of sin (2 Samuel, 16. 12; Psalm 31. 10; 40. 12). **gone over mine head**—as a flood. 5-8. The loathsomeness, corruption, and wasting torture of severe physical disease set forth his mental anguish. It is possible some bodily disease was connected. *The loins* are the seat of strength. His exhaustion left him only the power to groan. 9. That God can hear (Romans, 8. 26). 10. **My heart panteth**—as if barely surviving. **light... from me**—utter exhaustion (Psalm 6. 7; 13. 3). 11, 12. Friends desert but foes increase in malignity. **seek after my life**—(1 Samuel, 20. 1; 22. 23). 13. 14. He patiently submits, uttering no *reproaches* or replies (John 19. 9) to their insulting speeches; 15-17. for he is confident the **Lord**—*lit. Sovereign* (to whom he was a servant), would answer his prayer (Psalm 3, 4; 4. 1). and not permit their triumph in his partial *halting*, of which he was in danger. 18. Consciousness of sin makes suffering pungent, and suffering, rightly received, leads to confession. 19, 20. Still, while humbled before God, he is the victim of deadly enemies, full of malice and treachery. **enemies are lively**—*lit., of life*, who would take my life, *i.e.* deadly. 21, 22. (Cf. Psalm 22. 19; 35. 3). All terms of frequent use. In this Psalm the language is generally susceptible of application to Christ as a sufferer. David, as such, typifying Him. This does not require us to apply the confessions of sin, but only the pains or penalties which he bore for us.

## PSALM XXXIX.

**Ver. 1-13.** *To Jeduthun* (1 Chronicles, 16. 41, 42), one of the chief singers. His name mentioned, perhaps, as a special honour. Under depressing views of his frailty and the prosperity of the wicked, the Psalmist, tempted to murmur, checks the expression of his feelings, till led to regard his case aright, he prays for a proper view of his condition and for the divine compassion.

1. **I said**—or, resolved. **will take heed**—watch. **ways**—conduct, of which the use of the tongue is a part (James 1. 26). **bridle**—*lit., muzzle*, (cf. Deuteronomy, 25. 4). **while... before me**—in beholding their prosperity (Psalm 37. 10, 36). 2. **even from good**—(Genesis, 31. 24), everything. 3. His emotions, as a smothered flame, *burst* forth. 4-7. Some take these words as those of fretting, but they are not essentially such. The tinge of discontent arises from the character of his suppressed emotions. But, addressing God, they are softened and subdued, **make me to know**—experimentally appreciate, **how frail I am**—*lit., when I shall cease*. 5, 6. His prayer is answered in his obtaining an impressive view of the vanity of the life of all men, and their transient state. Their pomp is a mere *image*, and their wealth is gathered they know not for whom. 7. The interrogation makes the implied

negative stronger. Though this world offers nothing to our expectation, God is worthy of all confidence. 8-10. Patiently submissive, he prays for the removal of his chastisement, and that he may not be a reproach. 11. From his own case, he argues to that of all, that the destruction of man's enjoyment is ascribable to sin. 12, 13. Consonant with the tenor of the Psalm, he prays for God's compassionate regard to him as a stranger here, and that, as such was the condition of his fathers, so, like them, he may be cheered instead of being bound under wrath and chastened in displeasure.

## PSALM XL.

**Ver. 1-17.** In this Psalm a celebration of God's deliverance is followed by a profession of devotion to His service. Then follows a prayer for relief from imminent dangers involving the overthrow of enemies and the rejoicing of sympathising friends. In Hebrews, 10, 5, etc., Paul quotes *v.* 6-8, as the words of Christ, offering himself as a better sacrifice. Some suppose Paul accommodated David's words to express Christ's sentiments. But the value of his quotation would be thus destroyed, as it would have no force in his argument, unless regarded by his readers as the original sense of the passage in the Old Testament. Others suppose the Psalm describes David's feelings in suffering and joy; but the language quoted by Paul, in the sense given by him, could not apply to David in any of his relations, for as a type the language is not adapted to describe any event or condition of David's career, and as an individual representing the pious generally, neither he nor they could properly use it, (cf. on *v.* 7 below). The Psalm must be taken then, as the sixteenth, to express the feelings of Christ's human nature. The difficulties pertinent to this view will be considered as they occur.

**1-3.** The figures for deep distress are illustrated in Jeremiah's history (Jeremiah, 38. 6-12). Patience and trust manifested in distress, deliverance in answer to prayer, and the blessed effect of it in eliciting praise from God's true worshippers, teach us that Christ's suffering is our example, and His deliverance our encouragement (Hebrews, 5. 7, 8; 12. 3; 1 Peter, 4. 12-16). **inclined** — (the ear, Psalm 17. 6), as if to catch the faintest sigh. **a new song** — (Psalm 33. 3). **fear, and... trust** — revere with love and faith. **4. Blessed** — (Psalm 1. 1; 2. 12). **respecteth** — *lit., turned towards*, as an object of confidence. **turn aside** — from true God and His law to falsehood in worship and conduct. **5. be reckoned up in order** — (cf. Psalm, 5. 3; 33. 14; Isaiah, 44. 7), too many to be set forth regularly. This is but one instance of many. The use of the plural accords with the union of Christ and His people. In suffering and triumph, they are one with Him. 6-8. In Paul's view this passage has more meaning than the mere expression of grateful devotion to God's service. He represents Christ as declaring that the sacrifices, whether vegetable or animal, general or special expiatory offerings, would not avail to meet the demands of God's law, and that He had come to render the required satisfaction, which he states was effected by "the offering of the body of Christ," for that is the "will of God" which Christ came to fulfil or do, in order to effect **man's redemption**. We thus see that the contrast to the unsatisfactory

character assigned the Old Testament offerings in *v.* 6, is found in the compliance with God's law (cf. *v.* 7, 8). Of course, as Paul and other New Testament writers explain Christ's work, it consisted in more than being made under the law or obeying its precepts. It required an "obedience unto death," and that is the compliance here chiefly intended, and which makes the contrast with *v.* 6 clear. **mine ears hast thou opened** — Whether allusion is made to the custom of boring a servant's ear, in token of voluntary and perpetual enslavement (Exodus, 21. 6), or, that *the opening of the ear*, as in Isaiah, 48. 8; 50. 5 (though by a different word in *Hebrew*), denotes obedience by the common figure of hearing for obeying, it is evident that the clause is designed to express a devotion to God's will as avowed more fully in *v.* 8, and already explained. Paul, however, uses the words, "a body hast thou prepared me," which are found in the *Septuagint* in the place of the words, "*mine ears has thou opened.*" He does not lay any stress on this clause, and his argument is complete without it. It is, perhaps, to be regarded rather as an interpretation or free translation by the *Septuagint*, than either an addition or attempt at verbal translation. The *Septuagint* translators may have had reference to Christ's vicarious sufferings as taught in other Scriptures, as Isaiah, 53.; at all events the sense is substantially the same, as a body was essential to the required obedience (cf. Romans, 7. 4; 1 Peter, 2. 24), 7. **then** — in such case, without necessarily referring to order of time. **lo, I come** — I am prepared to do, etc. **in the volume of the book** — *roll of the book*. Such rolls, resembling maps, are still used in the synagogues. **written of me** — or, on me, prescribed to me (2 Kings, 22. 13). The first is the sense adopted by Paul. In either case, the Pentateuch, or law of Moses, is meant, and while it contains much respecting Christ directly, as Genesis, 3. 15; 49. 10; Deuteronomy, 18. 15, and, indirectly, in the Levitical ritual, there is nowhere any allusion to David. 9, 10. Christ's prophetic office is taught. He "preached" the great truths of God's government of sinners. **I have preached** — *lit., announced good tidings*. 11. may be rendered as an assertion, that God *will not withhold*, etc. (Psalm 16. 1). 12. **evils** — inflicted by others. **iniquities** — or, penal *afflictions*, and sometimes calamities in the wide sense. This meaning of the word is very common (Psalm 31. 11; 38. 4); cf. (Genesis, 4. 13, Cain's punishment); (Genesis, 19. 15, that of Sodom); (1 Samuel, 28. 10, of the witch of Endor); also (2 Samuel, 16. 12; Job, 19. 29; Isaiah, 5. 18; 53. 11). This meaning of the word is also favoured by the clause *taken hold of me*, which follows, which can be said appropriately of *sufferings*, but not of *sins* (cf. Job, 27. 20; Psalm 69. 24). Thus, the difficulties, in referring this Psalm to Christ, arising from the usual reading of this verse, are removed. Of the terrible *afflictions*, or sufferings, alluded to and endured for us, cf. Luke, 21. 39-45, and the narrative of the scenes of Calvary. **my heart faileth me** — (Matthew, 26. 38), "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." **cannot look up** — *lit., I cannot see*, not denoting the depression of conscious guilt, as Luke, 18. 13, but exhaustion from suffering, as *dimness* of eyes (Psalm 6. 7; 13. 3; 38. 10). The whole context thus sustains the sense assigned to *iniquities*. 13. (cf. Psalm 22. 19). 14, 15. The language is not necessarily imprecatory, but rather a confident expectation (Psalm



5. 11), though the former sense is not inconsistent with Christ's prayer for the forgiveness of His murderers, inasmuch as their confusion and shame might be the very means to prepare them for humbly seeking forgiveness (cf. Acts, 2. 37). **for a reward**—*lit., in consequence of.* **Aha**—(cf. Psalm 35. 21, 25). 16. (cf. Psalm 35. 27). **love thy salvation**—delight in its bestowal on others as well as themselves. 17. A summary of his condition and hopes. **thinketh upon**—or, provides for me. "He was heard," "when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death."

## PSALM XLI.

**Ver. 1-13.** The Psalmist celebrates the blessedness of those who compassionate the poor, conduct strongly contrasted with the spite of his enemies and neglect of his friends, in his calamity. He prays for God's mercy in view of his ill-desert, and, in confidence of relief, and that God will vindicate his cause, closes with a doxology.

**1-3.** God rewards kindness to the poor (Proverbs, 19. 17). From *v.* 2 and 11 it may be inferred that the Psalmist describes his own conduct. **poor**—in person, position, and possessions. **shall be blessed**—*lit., led aright, or safely,* prospered (Psalm 23. 3). **upon the earth**—or, land of promise (Psalm 25. 13; 27. 3-9, etc.). The figures of *v.* 3 are drawn from the acts of a kind nurse. 4. **I said**—I asked the mercy I show. **heal my soul**—(cf. Psalm 30. 2). "Sin and suffering are united," is one of the great teachings of the Psalms. 5, 6. A graphic picture of the conduct of a malignant enemy. **to see me**—as if to spy out my case. **he speaketh . . . itself**—or, "he speaketh vanity as to his heart" *i.e.*, does not speak candidly, "he gathereth iniquity to him," collects elements for mischief, and then divulges the gains of his hypocrisy. 7, 8. So of others, *all* act alike. **An evil disease**—*lit., a word of Belial,* some slander. **cleaveth**—*lit., poured on him.* **that he lieth**—*who has now laid down,* "he is utterly undone and our victory is sure." 9. **mine . . . friend**—*lit., man of my peace.* **eat . . . bread**—who depended on me, or was well treated by me. **lifted up his heel**—in scornful violence. As David and his fortunes typified Christ and His (cf. *Introduction*), so these words expressed the treatment he received, and also that of his Son and Lord; hence, though not distinctly prophetic, our Saviour (John, 13. 18) applies them to Judas, "that the Scripture may be fulfilled." This last phrase has a wide use in the New Testament, and is not restricted to denote special prophecies. 10. A lawful punishment of criminals is not revenge, nor inconsistent with their final good (cf. Psalm 40. 14, 15). 11. **favourest**—or, tenderly lovest me (Genesis, 34. 19), evinced by relief from his enemies; and, farther, God recognizes his innocence by upholding him, **settest . . . before thy face**—under thy watch and care, as God *before man's face* (Psalm 16. 8), is an object of trust and love. **blessed**—praised, usually applied to God. The word usually applied to men denotes *happiness* (Psalm 1. 1; 32. 1). With this doxology the first book closes.

## PSALM XLII.

**Ver. 1-11.** *Maschil* — (cf. Psalm 32., title). *For, or, of* (cf. *Introduction*) the sons of Korah. The writer, perhaps one of this Levitical family of singers accompanying David in exile, mourns his absence from the sanctuary, a cause of grief aggravated by the taunts of enemies, and is comforted in hopes of relief. This course of thought is repeated with some variety of detail, but closing with the same refrain.

1, 2. (cf. Psalm 63. 1). **panteth** — desires in a state of exhaustion. **appear before God** — in acts of worship, the terms used in the command for the stated personal appearance of the Jews at the sanctuary. 3. **where is thy God?** — implying that He had forsaken him (cf. 2 Samuel, 16. 7; Psalm 3. 2; 22. 8). 4. The verbs are properly rendered as futures, "I will remember," etc., etc. — *i.e.*, the recollection of this season of distress will give greater zest to the privileges of God's worship, when obtained. 5. Hence he chides his despondent soul, assuring himself a time of joy. **help of his countenance** — or, face (cf. Numbers, 6. 25; Psalm 4. 6; 16. 11). 6. Dejection again described. **therefore** — *i.e.*, finding no comfort in myself, I turn to thee, even in this distant "*land of Jordan and the (mountains) Hermons,*" the country east of Jordan. **hill Mizar** — as a name of a small hill contrasted with the mountains round about Jerusalem, perhaps denoted the contempt with which the place of exile was regarded. 7. The roar of successive billows, responding to that of floods of rain, represented the heavy waves of sorrow which overwhelmed him. 8. Still he relies on as constant a flow of divine mercy which will elicit his praise and encourage his prayer to God; 9, 10. in view of which he dictates to himself a prayer based on his distress, aggravated as it was by the cruel taunts and infidel suggestions of his foes. 11. This brings on a renewed self-chiding, and excites hopes of relief. **health [or, help] of my countenance** — (cf. *v.* 5), who cheers me, driving away clouds of sorrow from my face. **my God** — It is He of whose existence and favour my foes would have me doubt.

## PSALM XLIII.

**Ver. 1-5.** Excepting the recurrence of the refrain, there is no good reason to suppose this a part of the preceding, though the scope is the same. It has always been placed separate.

1. **Judge** — or, vindicate (Psalm 10. 18). **plead**, etc. — (Psalm 35. 1). **ungodly** — neither in character or condition objects of God's favour (cf. Psalm 4. 3). 2. **God of my strength** — by covenant relation my stronghold (Psalm 18. 1). **cast me off** — in scorn. **because** — or, in, *i.e.*, in such circumstances of oppression. 3. **light** — as Psalm 27. 1. **truth** — or, faithfulness (Psalm 25. 5), manifest it by fulfilling promises. *Light and truth* are personified as messengers who will bring him to the privileged place of worship. **tabernacles** — plural, in allusion to the various courts. 4. **the altar** — as the chief place of worship. The mention of the harp suggests the prominence of praise in his offering.

## PSALM XLIV.

**Ver. 1-26.** In a time of great national distress, probably in David's reign, the Psalmist recounts God's gracious dealings in former times, and the confidence they had learned to repose in him. After a vivid picture of their calamities, he humbly expostulates against God's apparent forgetfulness, reminding him of their faithfulness and mourning their heavy sorrows.

**1-3.** This period is that of the settlement of Canaan (Joshua, 24. 12; Judges, 6. 3). **have told**—or, related (cf. Exodus, 10. 2). **plantedst them**—*i.e.*, our fathers, who are also, from the parallel construction of the last clause, to be regarded as the object of "cast them out," which means—*lit.*, send them out, or, "extend them." *Heathen* and *people* denote the nations who were driven out to make room for the Israelites. **4. Thou art my King**—*lit.*, *he who is my King*, sustaining the same covenant relation as to the "fathers." **5.** The figure drawn from the habits of the ox. **6-8.** God is not only our sole help, but only worthy of praise. **thy name**—as Psalm 5. 11. **put...to shame**—(cf. Psalm 6. 10). disgraced. **9. But—contrasting**, cast off as abhorrent (Psalm 43. 2). **goest not forth**—*lit.*, *will not go* (2 Samuel, 5. 23). In several consecutive verses the leading verb is *future*, and the following one *past* (in *Hebrew*), thus denoting the causes and effects. Thus (*v.* 10, 11, 12), when defeated, spoiling follows, when delivered as sheep, dispersion follows, etc. **11.** The Babylonian captivity not necessarily meant. There were others (cf. 1 Kings, 8. 46). **13, 14.** (Cf. Deuteronomy, 28. 37; Psalm 79. 4). **15. shame of...face**—blushes in disgrace. **16.** Its cause, the taunts and presence of malignant enemies (Psalm 8. 2). **17-19.** They had not apostatised totally—were still God's people. **declined**—turned aside from God's law. **sore broken**—crushed. **place of dragons**—desolate, barren rocky wilderness (Psalm 63. 10; Isaiah, 13. 22). **shadow of death**—(cf. Psalm 23. 4). **20, 21.** A solemn appeal to God to witness their constancy. **Stretched out...hands**—gesture of worship (Exodus, 9. 29; Psalm 88. 9). **22.** Their protracted sufferings as God's people attests the constancy. Paul (Romans, 8. 36). uses this to describe Christian steadfastness in persecution. **23-26.** This style of addressing God, as indifferent, is frequent (Psalm 3. 7; 9. 19; 13. 1. etc). However low their condition, God is appealed to on the ground, and for the honour, of His mercy.

## PSALM XLV.

**Ver. 1-17.** *Shoshannim*—*lit.*, *Lilies*, either descriptive of an instrument so shaped, or denoting some tune or air so called, after which the Psalm was to be sung (cf. Psalm 8. title). A *song of loves*, or, of *beloved ones* (plural and feminine),—a conjugal song. *Maschil* (cf. Psalm 32. and 42.), denotes the didactic character of the Psalm; that it gives *instruction*, the song being of allegorical and not literal import. *The union and glories of Christ and his Church are described.* He is addressed as a king possessed of all essential graces, as a conqueror ex-

alted on the throne of a righteous and eternal government, and as a bridegroom arrayed in nuptial splendour. The Church is portrayed in the purity and loveliness of a royally adorned and attended bride, invited to forsake her home and share the honours of her affianced lord. The picture of an oriental wedding thus opened is filled up by representing the complimentary gifts of the wealthy with which the occasion is honoured, the procession of the bride, clothed in splendid raiment, attended by her virgin companions, and the entrance of the joyous throng into the palace of the King. A prediction of a numerous and distinguished progeny, instead of the complimentary wish for it usually expressed (cf. Genesis, 24. 60; Ruth, 4. 11, 12) and an assurance of perpetual fame, closes the Psalm. All ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters regarded this Psalm as an allegory of the purport above named. In the Song of Songs the allegory is carried out more fully. Hosea (ch. 1-3), treats the relation of God and His people under the same figure, and its use to set forth the relation of Christ and His Church runs through both parts of the Bible (cf. Isaiah, 54. 5; 62. 4, 5; Matthew, 22. 8; 25. 1; John, 3. 29; Ephesians, 5. 25-33, etc., etc.). Other methods of exposition have been suggested. Several Jewish monarchs, from Solomon to the wicked Ahab, and various foreign princes, have been named as the hero of the song. But to none of them can the terms here used be shown to apply, and it is hardly probable that any mere nuptial song, especially of a heathen king, would be permitted a place in the sacred songs of the Jews. The advocates for any other than the Messianic interpretation have generally silenced each other in succession, while the application of the most rigorous rules of a fair system of interpretation has but strengthened the evidence in its favour. The scope of the Psalm above given is easy and sustained by the explication of its details. The quotation of *v.* 6, 7, by Paul (Hebrews, 1. 8, 9), as applicable to Christ, *ought to be conclusive*, and their special exposition shows the propriety of such an application.

1. An animated preface indicative of strong emotion. *Lit.*, *My heart overflows; a good matter I speak: the things which I have made, etc. inditing*—*lit.*, *boiling up*, as a fountain overflows. **my tongue is the pen**—a mere instrument of God's use. **of a ready writer**—*i.e.*, it is fluent. The theme is inspiring and language flows fast. 2. To rich personal attractions is added *grace of the lips*, captivating powers of speech. This is given and becomes a source of power and proves a blessing. Christ is a prophet (Luke, 4. 22). 3, 4. The king is addressed as ready to go forth to battle. **sword**—(cf. Revelation, 1. 16; 19. 15). **mighty**—(cf. Isaiah, 9. 6). **glory and . . . majesty**—generally used as divine attributes (Psalm 96. 6; 104. 1; 111. 3), or as specially conferred on mortals (Psalm 21. 5), perhaps these typically. **ride prosperously**—or, conduct a successful war. **because of**—for the interests of truth, etc. **meekness . . . righteousness**—without any connective—*i.e.*, a righteousness, or equity of government, distinguished by meekness or condescension (Psalm 18. 35). **right hand**—or power, as its organ. **shall teach thee**—point the way to terrible things—*i.e.*, in conquest of enemies. 5. The result. **people**—whole nations are subdued. 6. no lawful construction can be devised to change the sense here given, and sustained by the ancient versions, and above all, by Paul (Hebrews, 1.

8). Of the perpetuity of this government (cf. 2 Samuel, 7. 13; Psalm 10. 16; 72. 5; 80. 4; 110. 4; Isaiah, 9. 7). 7. As in *v.* 6, the divine nature is made prominent, here the moral qualities of the human are alleged as the reason or ground of the mediatorial exultation. Some render "*O, God, thy God,*" instead of **God thy God** — but the latter is sustained by the same form (Psalm 50. 7), and it was only of His human nature that the anointing could be predicated (cf. Isaiah, 61. 3). **oil of gladness** — or, token of gladness, as used in feasts and other times of solemn joy (cf. 1 Kings, 1. 39, 40). **fellows** — other kings. 8. The King thus inaugurated is now presented as a bridegroom, who appears in garments richly perfumed, brought out from *ivory palaces*, His royal residence; by which, as indications of the happy bridal occasion, He has been gladdened. 9. In completion of this picture of a marriage festival, female attendants, or bridesmaids of the highest rank, attend Him, while the queen, in rich apparel (*v.* 13), stands ready for the nuptial procession. 10, 11. She is invited to the union, for forming which, she must leave her father's people. She representing, by the form of the allegory, the Church; this address is illustrated by all those scriptures, from Genesis, 22. 1, on, which speak of the people of God as a chosen, separate, and peculiar people. The relation of subjection to her spouse at once accords with the law of marriage, as given in Genesis, 3. 16; 18. 12; Ephesians, 5. 22; 1 Peter, 3. 5, 6, and the relation of the Church to Christ (Ephesians, 5. 24). The love of the husband is intimately connected with the entire devotion to which the bride is exhorted. 12. **daughter of Tyre** — (Psalm 9. 14), denotes the people. Tyre, celebrated for its great wealth, is selected to represent the richest nations, an idea confirmed by the next clause. These gifts are brought as means to conciliate the royal parties, representing the admitted subjection of the officers. This well sets forth the exalted position of the Church and her head, whose moral qualities receive the homage of the world. The contribution of material wealth to sustain the institutions of the Church may be included (cf. "riches of the Gentiles." Psalm 72. 10; Isaiah, 60; 5-10). 13. **the King's daughter** — a term of dignity. It may also intimate, with some allusion to the teaching of the allegory, that the bride of Christ, the Church, is the daughter of the great king, God. **within** — not only is her outward raiment costly, but all her apparel of the richest texture. **wrought gold** — gold embroidery, or cloth in which gold is woven. 14, 15. The progress of the procession is described: according to the usual custom the bride and attendants are conducted to the palace. Some, for the words — **in raiment of needlework** — propose another rendering, *on variegated* (or, embroidered) *cloths* — *i.e.*, in the manner of the East, richly wrought tapestry was spread on the ground, on which the bride walked. As the dress had been already mentioned, this seems to be a probable translation. **shall be brought** — in solemn form (cf. Job, 10. 19; 21. 22). The entrance into the palace with great joy closes the scene. So shall the Church be finally brought to her Lord, and united amid the festivities of the holy beings in heaven. 16. As earthly monarchs govern widely extended empires by viceroys, this glorious King is represented as supplying all the principalities of earth with princes of His own numerous progeny. 17. The glories of this empire shall be as wide as the world and lasting as eternity. **there-**

**fore** — because thus glorious, the praise shall be universal and perpetual. Some writers have taxed their ingenuity to find in the history and fortunes of Christ and His Church exact parallels for every part of this splendid allegory, not excepting its gorgeous oriental imagery. Thus, by the dresses of the King and queen, are thought to be meant the eminent endowments and graces of Christ and His people. The attendant woman, supposed (though inconsistently it might seem with the inspired character of the work) to be concubines, are thought to represent the Gentile Churches, and the bride, the Jewish, etc., etc. But it is evident that we cannot pursue such a mode of interpretation. For, following the allegory, we must suspend to the distant future the results of a union, whose consummation as a marriage is still distant (cf. Revelation, 21. 9). In fact the imagery here and elsewhere sets before us the Church in two aspects. As a body, is yet incomplete, the whole is yet ungathered. As a moral institution, it is yet imperfect. In the final catastrophe, it will be complete and perfect. Thus, as a bride adorned, etc., it will be united with its Lord. Thus the Union of Christ and the Church triumphant is set forth. On the other hand, in regard to its component parts, the relation of Christ as head, as husband, etc., already exists, and as these parts form an institution in this world, it is by His union with it, and the gifts and graces with which He endows it, that a spiritual seed arises and spreads in the world. Hence we must fix our minds only on the *one simple but grand truth, that Christ loves the Church, is Head over all things for it, raises it, in His exaltation, to the highest moral dignity—a dignity of which every, even the meanest, sincere disciple will partake.* As to the time, then, in which this allegorical prophecy is to be fulfilled, it may be said, that no periods of time are specially designated. The *characteristics* of the relation of Christ and His Church are indicated, we may suppose that the whole process of His exaltation from the *declaration* of His Sonship, by His resurrection, to the grand catastrophe of the final judgment, with all the collateral blessings to the Church and the world, lay before the vision of the inspired prophet.

## PSALM XLVI.

**Ver. 1-11.** *Upon Alamoth*—most probably denotes the *treble*, or part sung by female voices, the word meaning *virgins*; and which was sung with some appropriately keyed instrument (cf. 1 Chronicles, 15. 19, 21; Psalm 6. title). The theme may be stated in Luther's well-known words, "A strong fortress is our God." The great deliverance (2 Kings, 19. 35; Isaiah, 37. 36), may have occasioned its composition.

**1. refuge** — *lit., a place of trust* (Psalm 2. 12). **strength** — (Psalm 18. 2). **present help** — *lit., a help he has been found exceedingly.* **trouble** — as Psalm 18. 7. 2. 3. The most violent civil commotions are illustrated by the great physical commotions. **swelling** — well represents the *pride* and haughtiness of insolent foes. 4. God's favor is denoted by a *river* (cf. Psalm 36. 8; Zechariah, 14. 8; Revelation, 22. 1). **city of God, the holy place** — His earthly residence, Jerusalem and the temple (cf. Psalm 2. 6; 3. 4; 20. 2; 48. 2, etc.). God's favor, like a river whose waters

are conducted in channels, is distributed to all parts of His Church. **Most High** — denoting His supremacy (Psalm 17. 2). 5. **right early** — *lit.*, at the turn of morning, or, change from night to day, a critical time (Psalm 30. 5; cf. Isaiah, 37. 36). 7. (Cf. v. 4). **earth melted** — all powers dissolved by His mere word (Psalm 75. 3; Hosea, 2. 22). 7. **with us** — on our side, His presence is terror to our enemies, safety to us. **refuge** — high place (Psalm 9. 9; cf. also Psalm 24. 6, 10). 8. **what desolation** — *lit.*, who hath put desolation, destroyed our enemies. 9. *The usual weapons of war*, (Psalm 7. 12), as well as those using them, are brought to an end. 10. **be still, etc.** — *lit.*, Leave off to oppose me and vex my people. I am over all for their safety (cf. Isaiah, 2. 11; Ephesians, 1. 22).

## PSALM XLVII.

**Ver. 1-9.** Praise is given to God for victory, perhaps that recorded (2 Chronicles, 20); and His dominion over all people, Jews and Gentiles, is asserted.

1. **clap . . . hands . . . people** — *lit.*, peoples, or, nations (cf. Deuteronomy, 32. 43; Psalm 18. 49; 98. 9). 2, 3. His universal sovereignty now exists, and will be made known, **under us** — *i.e.*, His saints; Israel's temporal victories were types of the spiritual conquest of the true Church. 4. **He shall . . . inheritance** — the heathen to be possessed by his Church (Psalm 2. 8), as Canaan by the Jews. **excellency of Jacob** — *lit.*, pride, or, that in which he glories (not necessarily, though often, in a bad sense) the privileges of the chosen people — **whom he loved** — His love being the sole cause of granting them. 5-7 God victorious over His enemies, re-ascends to heaven, amid the triumphant praises of His people, who celebrate His sovereign dominion. This sovereignty is what the Psalm teaches; hence he adds — **sing . . . praises with understanding** — *lit.*, sing and play an instructive (Psalm). The whole typifies Christ's ascension (cf. Psalm 68. 18). 8, 9. The instruction continued. **throne of . . . holiness** — or, holy throne (cf. on Psalm 2. 6; 22. 3). **princes** — who represent peoples. For — **even** — supply *as*, or, *to* — *i.e.* they all become united under covenant with Abraham's God. **shields** — as Hosea, 4. 18, rulers.

## PSALM XLVIII.

**Ver. 1-14.** This is a spirited Psalm and Song (cf. Psalm 30), having probably been suggested by the same occasion as the foregoing. It sets forth the privileges and blessings of God's spiritual dominion as the terror of the wicked and joy of the righteous.

1. **to be praised** — always: it is an epithet as Psalm 18. 3, **mountain of his holiness** — His Church (cf. Isaiah, 2. 2, 3; 25. 6, 7, 10); the sanctuary was erected first on *Mount Zion*, then (as the temple) on *Moriah*; hence the figure. 2, 3. **situation** — *lit.*, elevation, **joy of**, etc. — source of joy, **sides of the north** — poetically for eminent, lofty, distinguished, as the ancients believed the *north* to be the highest part of the earth (cf. Isaiah, 14. 13). **palaces** — *lit.*, citadels. **refuge** —

(Psalm 9. 10; 18. 3). He was so known in them, because they enjoyed His presence. 4-6. **For**—the reason is given. Though the kings (perhaps of Moab and Ammon, cf. Psalm 83. 3-5), combined, a conviction of God's presence with His people, evinced by the unusual courage with which the prophets, (cf. 2 Chronicles, 20. 12-20), had inspired them, seized on their minds, and smitten with sudden and intense alarm, they fled astonished. 7. **ships of Tarshish**—as engaged in a distant and lucrative trade, the most valuable. The phrase may illustrate God's control over all material agencies, whether their literal destruction be meant or not. 8. This present experience assures of that perpetual care which God extends to his Church. 9. **thought of**—*lit.*, compared, or considered, in respect of former dealings. **in the... temple**—in acts of solemn worship (cf. 2 Chronicles, 20. 28). 10. **according... praise**—*i.e.*, as thy perfection: manifested, (cf. Psalm 8. 1; 20. 1-7), demand praise, it shall be given everywhere. **thy right hand, etc.**—thy righteous government is displayed by thy power. 11. **the daughters, etc.**—*the small towns*, or the people, with the chief city, or rulers of the Church. **judgments**—decisions and act of right government. 12-14. The call to survey Zion, or the Church, as a fortified city, is designed to "how well our God secures his fold." This security is perpetual, and its pledge is his guidance through this life.

## PSALM XLIX.

**Ver. 1-20.** This Psalm instructs and consoles. It teaches that earthly advantages are not reliable for permanent happiness, and that, however prosperous worldly men may be for a time, their ultimate destiny is ruin, while the pious are safe in God's care.

1-3. All are called to hear what interests all. **world**—*lit.*, duration of life, the present time. 4. **incline**—to hear attentively (Psalm 17. 6; 31. 2). **parable**—In *Hebrew* and *Greek*, *parable* and *proverb* are translations of the same word. It denotes a *comparison*, or form of speech, which, under one image, includes many, and is expressive of a general truth capable of various illustrations. Hence it may be used for the *illustration* itself. For the former sense, *proverb* (*i.e.* one word for several) is the usual English term, and for the latter, in which comparison is prominent, *parable* (*i.e.*, one thing laid by another). The distinction is not always observed, since here, and Psalm 78. 2, *proverb* would better express the style of the composition (cf. also Proverbs, 26. 7, 9; Habakkuk, 2. 6; John, 16. 25. 29). Such forms of speech are often very figurative and also obscure (cf. Matthew, 13. 12-15). Hence the use of the parallel word—**dark saying**—or, *riddle*, (cf. Ezekiel. 17. 2). **open**—is to explain. **upon the harp**—the accompaniment for a lyric. 5. **iniquity**—*lit.*, *my supplanters* (Genesis, 27. 36.), or oppressors: "I am surrounded by the evils they inflict." 6. They are vain-glorious. 7-9, yet unable to save themselves or others. **it ceaseth for ever**—*i.e.*, the ransom fails, the price is too precious, costly. **corruption**—*lit.*, *pit*, or, *grave*, thus shewing that *soul* is used for life. 10. **For he seeth**—*i.e.*, corruption, then follows the illustration. **wise... fool** (Psalm 14. 1; Proverbs, 1. 32; 10. 1).—**likewise**—alike together



— (Psalm 4. 8).— **die** — All meet the same fate. 11. Still infatuated and flattered with hopes of perpetuity, they call their lands, or, “celebrate their names on account of (their) lands.” 12. Contrasted with this vanity is their frailty. However honoured, man **abideth not** — *lit.*, *lodgeth not*, remains not till morning, but suddenly perished as (wild) beasts, whose lives are taken without warning. 13. Though their way is folly, others follow the same course of life. 14. **like sheep** (cf. v. 12.), unwittingly, they — **are laid** — or, put, etc. **death shall feed on** [or, better, *shall visit*] **them** — as a shepherd (cf. Psalm 28. 9, *Margin*). **have dominion over** [or, subduc<sup>t</sup> them] **in the morning** — suddenly, or in their turn, their beauty — *lit.*, *form* or shape. **shall consume** — *lit.*, *is for the consumption, i.e., of the grave.* **from their dwelling** — *lit.*, *from their home (they go) to it, i.e., the grave.* 15. The pious, delivered from the — **power** — *lit.*, *the hand*, of death, are taken under God’s care. 16-19. applies this instruction. Be not anxious (Psalm 37. 1., etc.), since death cut off the prosperous wicked whom you dread. **Though . . . lived, etc.** — *lit.*, *For in his life he blessed his soul*, or, himself (Luke, 12. 19; 16. 25); yet (v. 19), he has had his portion. **men will praise . . . thyself** — Flatterers enhance the rich fool’s self-complacency; the form of address to him strengthens the emphasis of the sentiment. 20. (Cf. v. 12). The *folly* is more distinctly expressed by *understandeth not* substituted for *abideth not*.

## PSALM L.

**Ver. 1-23.** In the grandeur and solemnity of a divine judgment, God is introduced as instructing men in the nature of true worship, exposing hypocrisy, warning the wicked, and encouraging the pious.

1-4. The description of this majestic appearance of God resembles that of His giving the law (cf. Exodus, 19. 16; 20. 18; Deuteronomy, 31. 1). **from above** — *lit.*, *above* (Genesis, 1. 7). **heavens . . . earth** — for all creatures are witnesses (Deuteronomy, 4. 26; 30. 19; Isaiah, 1. 2). 5. **my saints** — (Psalm 4. 3) — **made** (*lit.*, *cut*) **a covenant, etc.** — alluding to the dividing of a victim of sacrifice, by which covenants were ratified the parties passing between the divided portions (cf. Genesis, 15. 10, 18). 6. The inhabitants of heaven, who well know God’s character, attest His righteousness as a judge. 7. **I will testify against** — *i.e.*, for failure to worship ought. **thy God** — and so, by covenant as well as creation, entitled to a pure worship. 8-15. However scrupulous in external worship, it was offered as if they conferred an obligation in giving God His own, and with a degrading view of Him as needing it. Reproving them for such foolish and blasphemous notions, He teaches them to *offer*, or *lit.*, *sacrifice*, thanksgiving, and pay, or perform, their vows — *i.e.*, to bring, with the external symbolical service, the homage of the heart, and faith, penitence, and love. To this is added an invitation to seek, and a promise to afford, all needed help in trouble. 16-20. **the wicked** — *i.e.*, the formalist, as now exposed, and who lead vicious lives (cf. Romans, 2. 21, 23). They are unworthy to use even the words of God’s law. Their hypocrisy and vice are exposed by illustrations from sins against the seventh, eighth,

and ninth commandments. 21, 22. God, no longer (even in appearance) disregarding such, exposes their sins, and threatens a terrible punishment. **forget God** — This denotes unmindfulness of His true character. 23. **offereth praise** — (*v.* 14), so that the external worship is a true index of the heart. **ordereth . . . aright** — acts in a straight, right manner, opposed to turning aside (Psalm 25. 5). In such, pure worship and a pure life evince their true piety, and they will enjoy God's presence and favour.

## PSALM LI.

**Ver. 1-19.** On the occasion (*cf.* 2 Samuel, 11. 12). The Psalm illustrates true repentance, in which are comprised conviction, confession, sorrow, prayer for mercy, and purposes of amendment, and it is accompanied by a lively faith.

**1-4.** A plea for mercy is a confession of guilt. **blot out** — as from a register. **transgressions** — *lit.*, *rebellions* (Psalm 19. 13; 32. 1). **wash me** — Purity as well as pardon is desired by true penitents. **for . . . before me** — Conviction preceds forgiveness, and, as a gift of God, is a plea for it (Samuel, 12. 13; Psalm 32. 5; 1 John, 1. 9). **against thee** — chiefly, and as sins against the others are violations of God's law, in one sense *only*. **that . . . judgest** — *i.e.*, all palliation of his crime is excluded; it is the design in making this confession, to recognize God's justice, however severe the sentence. 5, 6. His guilt was aggravated by his essential, native sinfulness, which is as contrary to God's requisitions of inward purity as are outward sins to those for right conduct. **thou shalt make, etc.** — may be taken to express God's gracious purpose in view of His strict requisition; a purpose of which David might have availed himself as a check to his native love for sin, and, in not doing so, aggravated his guilt. **truth . . . and . . . wisdom** — are terms often used for piety (*cf.* Job, 28. 28; Psalm 119. 30). 7-12. A series of prayers for forgiveness and purifying. **purge . . . hyssop** — The use of this plant in the ritual, (Exodus, 12. 22; Numbers, 19. 6, 18), suggests the idea of atonement as prominent here; *purge* refers to vicarious satisfaction (Numbers, 19. 17-20). **make . . . joy** — by forgiving me, which will change distress to joy. **hide, etc.** — Turn from beholding. **create** — a work of almighty power. **in me** — *lit.*, *to*, or, *for me*: bestow as a gift, a heart free from taint of sin (Psalm 24. 4; 73. 1), **renew** — implies that he had possessed it: the essential principle of a new nature had not been lost, but its influence interrupted, (Luke, 22. 32); for *v.* 11 shows that he had not lost God's presence and Spirit, (1 Samuel, 16. 13), though he had lost the "joy of his salvation," (*v.* 12), for whose return he prays. **right spirit** — *lit.*, *constant*, firm, not yielding to temptation. **free spirit** — *they* ought not to be supplied, for the word *free* is, *lit.*, *willing*, and *spirit* is that of David. "Let a willing spirit uphold me," *i.e.*, with a soul willingly confirmed to God's law, he would be preserved in a right course of conduct. 13. **then** — such will be the effect of this gracious work. **ways** — of providence and human duty (Psalm 18. 21, 30; 32. 8; Luke, 22. 32). 14. **deliver** — or, Free me (Psalm 39. 8) from the *guilt* of murder (2 Samuel, 12. 9, 10; Psalm 5. 6). **righteousness** — as Psalm 7. 17; 31. 1. 15. **open . . . lips** — by remov-

ing my sense of guilt. 16. Praise is better than sacrifice (Psalm 50. 14), and implying faith, penitence, and love, glorifies God. In true penitents the joys for pardon mingle with sorrow for sin. 18. **do good, etc.** — Visit not my sin on thy Church. **build...walls** — is to show favour; cf. Psalm 89. 40, for opposite form and idea. 19. *God reconciled*, material sacrifices will be acceptable (Psalm 4. 5; cf. Isaiah, I. 11-17).

## PSALM LII.

**Ver. 1-9.** Cf. 1 Samuel, 21. 1-10; 22. 1-10, for the history of the title. The first verse gives the theme: the boast of the wicked over the righteous is vain; for God constantly cares for His people. This is expanded by describing the malice and deceit, and the ruin, of the wicked, and the happy state of the pious.

**1. mighty man** — *lit., hero.* Doeg may be thus addressed, ironically, in respect of his might in slander. **2. tongue** — for self. **mischiefs** — evil to others (Psalm 5. 9; 38. 12). **working deceitfully** — (Psalm 10. 7), as a keen, smoothly moving razor, cutting quietly, but deeply. **3, 4. all devouring** — *lit., swallowing*, which utterly destroy (cf. Psalm 21. 9; 35. 25). **5. likewise** — or, so, also, as you have done to others God will do to you (Psalm 18. 27). The following terms describe the most entire ruin. **shall...fear** — regard with religious awe. **laugh at him** — for his folly; **7.** for trusting in riches and being strong in — **wickedness** — *lit., mischief, (v. 2)*, instead of trusting in God. **the man** — *lit., the mighty man, or hero, (v. 1)*. **8.** The figure used is common (Psalm 1. 3; Jeremiah, 11. 16). **green** — fresh. **house, etc.** — in communion with God (cf. Psalm 27. 4, 5). **for ever and ever** — qualifies mercy. **9. hast done** — *i.e.*, what the context supplies, preserved me (Psalm 22. 31). **wait...name** — hope in thy perfections, manifested for my good (Psalm 5. 11; 20. 1). **for it is good** — *i.e.*, thy name, and the whole method or result of its manifestation (Psalm 54. 6; 69. 16).

## PSALM LIII.

**Ver. 1-6.** *On Mahalath* — (cf. Psalm 88. title). Why this repetition of Psalm 14, is given we do not know.

**1-4,** with few verbal changes, correspond with Psalm 14. **5.** Instead of assurances of God's presence with the pious, and a complaint of the wicked, Psalm 14. 5, 6, portrays the ruin of the latter, whose "bones" are "scattered" (cf. Psalm 141. 7), and who are put to shame as contemptuously rejected of God.

## PSALM LIV.

**Ver. 1-7.** Cf. title of Psalm 4 and 32; for the history, 1 Samuel, 23. 19, 29; 26. 1-25. After an earnest cry for help, the Psalmist promises praise in the assurance of a hearing.

**1. by the name** — (Psalm 5. 11), specially power. **judge me** — as

Psalm 7. 8 ; 26. 1. 2. (Cf. Psalm 4. 1 ; 5. 1). 3. **strangers** — perhaps Ziphites. **oppressors** — *lit., terrible ones*, (Isaiah, 13. 11 ; 25. 3). Such were Saul and his army. **not set . . . them** — acted as atheists, without God's fear (cf. Psalm 16. 8). 4. (Cf. Psalm 30. 10). **with them** — on their side, and for me (cf. Psalm 46. 11). 5. **he shall . . . evil** — or, Evil shall return on (Psalm 7. 16) my enemies or watchers *i.e.*, to do me evil (Psalm 6. 7). **in thy truth** — thy verified promise. 6. **I will freely, etc.** — or, present a *free will* offering (Leviticus, 7. 16 ; Numbers, 15. 3). 7. **mine eye . . . desire** — (cf. Psalm 50. 10 ; 112. 8), expresses satisfaction in beholding the overthrow of his enemies as those of God, without implying any selfish or unholy feeling (cf. Psalm 52. 6, 7).

## PSALM LV.

**Ver. 1-23.** In great terror on account of enemies, and grieved by the treachery of a friend, the Psalmist offers an earnest prayer for relief. He mingles confident assurance of divine favor to himself with invocations and predictions of God's avenging judgments on the wicked. The tone suits David's experience, both in the times of Saul and Absalom, though perhaps, neither was exclusively before his mind.

1. **hide not thyself**, etc. — (cf. Psalm 13. 1 ; 27. 9), withhold not help. 2. The terms of the last clause express full indulgence of grief. 3. **oppression** — *lit., persecution*. **they . . . iniquity** — *lit., they make evil doings slide upon me*. 4, 5. express great alarm. **come upon [or lit., into] me**. 6. **be at rest** — *lit., dwell, i.e., permanently*. 7. 8. Even a wilderness is a safer place than exposure to such evils, terrible as storm and tempest. 9. **destroy** — *lit., Swallow* (Psalm 21. 9). **divide their tongues** — or, confound their speech, and hence their counsels (Genesis, 11. 7). **the city** — perhaps Jerusalem, the scene of anarchy, 10. 11., which is described in detail (cf. Psalm 7. 14-16). **wickedness** — *lit., Mischief*, evils resulting from others (Psalm 5. 9 ; 52. 2, 7). **streets** — *lit., wide places*, markets, courts of justice, and any public place. 12-14. This description of treachery does not deny, but aggravates, the injury from enemies. **guide** — *lit., friend* (Proverbs 16. 28 ; 17. 9). **acquaintance** — in *Hebrew*, a yet more intimate associate. **in company** — *lit., with a crowd*, in a festal procession. 15. **let death, etc.** — or, "Desolations are on him." **let them go** (*lit., they will go*) **quick** — or, living, in the midst of life, death will come (cf. Numbers, 16. 33). **among them** — or, within them, in their hearts (Psalm 5. 9 ; 49. 11). 16-18. God answers his constant and repeated prayers. **many with me** — *i.e.*, by the context, fighting with me. 19. God hears the wicked in wrath. **abideth [or sitteth] of old** — enthroned as a sovereign. **because . . . no changes** — Prosperity hardens them (Psalm 73. 5). 20, 21. The treachery is aggravated by hypocrisy. The changes of number *v.* 15. 23. and here, enlivens the picture, and implies that that the chief traitor and his accomplices are in view together. 22. **thy burden** — *lit., gift*, what is assigned you. **he shall sustain** — *lit., supply food*, and so all need (Psalm 57. 25 ; Matthew, 6. 11). **to be moved** — from the secure position of his favour (Psalm 10. 6). 23. **bloody . . . days** — (cf. Psalm 5. 6 :

51. 14), deceit and murderous dispositions often united. The threat is directed specially (not as a general truth) against the wicked, then in the writer's view.

## PSALM LVI.

**Ver. 1-13.** *Upon Jonath-elem-rechokim* — *lit., upon the Dove of silence* of distant places; either denoting a melody (cf. on Psalm 9), of that name, to which this Psalm was to be performed; or it is an enigmatical form of denoting the subject, as given in the history referred to (1 Samuel, 21. 11, etc.), David being regarded as an uncomplaining, meek dove, driven from his native home to wander in exile. Beset by domestic and foreign foes, David appeals confidently to God, recites his complaints, and closes with joyful and assured anticipations of God's continued help.

**1, 2. would swallow** — *lit., panic as a raging beast* (Acts, 9. 1). **enemies** — *watchers* (Psalm 54. 5). **Most High** — as it is not elsewhere used absolutely for God, some render the word here, *arrogantly*, or proudly, as qualifying "those who fight," etc. **3. in** [*as lit., unto*] **thee** — to whom he turns in trouble. **4. in God..his word** — By His grace or aid (Psalm 60. 12; 108. 13), or, "I will boast in God as to His word;" in either case His word is the special matter and cause of praise. **flesh** — for mankind (Psalm 65. 2; Isaiah, 31. 3), intimating frailty. **5, 6.** A vivid picture of the conduct of malicious enemies. **7. shall they escape?** — or better, "Their escape is by iniquity." **cast..people** — humble those who so proudly oppose thy servant. **8.** God is mindful of his exile and remembers his tears. The custom of *bottling the tears* of mourners as a memorial, which has existed in some Eastern nations, may explain the figure. **9. God is for me** — or, on my side (Psalm 118. 6; 124. 1, 2), hence he is sure of the repulse of his foes. **12. I will..praises** — will pay what I have vowed. **13.** The question implies an affirmative answer, drawn from past experience. **falling** — as from a precipice. **before God** — in His favour during life.

## PSALM LVII.

**Ver. 1-11.** *Al-taschith* — Destroy not. This is perhaps an enigmatical allusion to the critical circumstances connected with the history, for which cf. 1 Samuel, 22. 1; 26. 1-3. In Moses' prayer (Deuteronomy, 9. 26); it is a prominent petition deprecating God's anger against the people. This explanation suits the 58th and 59th also. Asaph uses it for the 75th, in the scope of which there is allusion to some emergency. *Michtam* — (cf. Psalm 16.). To an earnest cry for divine aid, the Psalmist adds, as often, the language of praise, in the assured hope of a favourable hearing.

**1. my soul** — or, self, or life, which is threatened. **shadow of thy wings** — (Psalm 17. 8; 36. 7). **calamities** — *lit., mischiefs* (Psalm 52. 2; 55. 10). **2. performeth** — or, completes what he has begun. **3. from..swallow me up** — that pants in rage after me (Psalm 56. 2). **mercy and..truth** — (Psalm 25. 10; 36. 5), as messengers (Psalm 43,

3) sent to deliver him. 4. The mingled figures of wild beasts (Psalm 10. 9; 17. 12), and weapons of war (Psalm 11. 2), heightens the picture of danger. **whose . . . tongue** — or, slanders. 5. This doxology illustrates his views of the connection of his deliverance with God's glory. 6. (Cf. Psalm 7. 15; 9. 15, 16). 7. **I will . . . praise** — both with voice and instrument. 8. Hence he addresses his *glory*, or *tongue* (Psalm 16. 9; 30. 12), and his psaltery, or lute and harp. **I myself . . . early** — *lit.*, *I will awaken dawn*, poetically expressing his zeal and diligence. 9-10. As His mercy and 'ruth, so shall His praise, fill the universe.

## PSALM LVIII.

**Ver. 1-11.** David's critical condition in some period of the Sauline persecution probably occasioned this Psalm, in which the Psalmist teaches that the innate and actual sinfulness of men deserves, and shall receive, God's righteous vengeance, while the pious may be consoled by the evidence of His wise and holy government of men.

**1. O congregation** — *lit.*, *O dumb* — the word used is never translated "congregation." "Are ye dumb? ye should speak righteousness," may be the translation. In any case, the writer remonstrates with them, perhaps a council, who were assembled to try his cause, and bound to give a right decision. 2. This they did not design; but, **weigh . . . violence** — or, give decisions of violence. *Weigh* is a figure to express the acts of judges. **in the earth** — publicly. 3-5. describe the wicked generally, who sin naturally, easily, malignantly, and stubbornly. **stoppeth her** [or *lit.*, *his*] **ear** — *i.e.*, the wicked man (the singular used collectively), who thus becomes like the deaf adder which has no ear. 6. He prays for their destruction, under the figure of ravenous beasts (Psalm 3. 7; 7. 2). 7. **which run continually** — *lit.*, *they shall go to themselves*, utterly depart, as rapid mountain torrents. **he bendeth . . . his arrows** — prepares it. The term for preparing a bow applied to arrows (Psalm 64. 3). **let them . . . pieces** — *lit.*, *as if they cut themselves off* — *i.e.*, become blunted and of no avail. 8, 9. Other figures of this utter ruin; the last denoting rapidity. In a shorter time than pots feel the heat of thorns on fire — **he shall take them away as with a whirlwind** — *lit.*, *blow him (them) away*. **both living . . . wrath** — *lit.*, *as the living or fresh*, as the heated or burning — *i.e.*, thorns — all easily blown away, so easily and quickly the wicked. The figure of the *snail* perhaps alludes to its loss of saliva when moving. Though obscure in its clauses, the general sense of the passage is clear. 10, 11. **wash . . . wicked** — denoting great slaughter. The joy of triumph over the destruction of the wicked is because they are God's enemies, and their overthrow shows that he reigneth (cf. Psalm 52, 5-7; 54. 7). In this assurance let heaven and earth rejoice (Psalm 96. 10; 97. 1, etc.).

## PSALM LIX.

**Ver. 1-17.** Cf. Psalm 57., and for history, 1 Samuel, 19. 11, etc. The scope is very similar to that of the 57th; prayer in view of malicious and violent foes, and joy in prospect of relief.

**1. defend** — (cf. *Marginal*). **rise up . . . me** — (cf. Psalm 17. 7). **a.**

(cf. Psalm 5. 5 ; 6. 8). 4, 5. **prepare, etc.**—*lit.*, set themselves as in array. **awake**—(cf. Psalm 3. 7 ; 7. 6), appeals to God in his covenant relation to his people (Psalm 9. 18). 6, 7. They are as ravening dogs seeking prey, and, as such, *belch out*—*i.e.*, slanders, their impudent barkings. **for who, say they**—For the full expression with the supplied words cf. Psalm 64. 5. 8. (cf. Psalm 2. 4 ; 37. 13). 9. By judicious expositors, and on good grounds, this is better rendered, "O my strength, on thee will I wait" (*v.* 17). **defence**—(cf. Psalm 18. 3). 10. **prevent me**—(Psalm 21. 3). **see my desire**—in their overthrow (Psalm 54. 7). **enemies**—as Psalm 5. 8. 11. **slay them not**—at once (Judges, 2. 21-23); but perpetuate their punishment (Genesis, 4. 12; Numbers, 32. 13), by scattering or making them wander, and humble them. 12. **let them be...taken in their pride**—while evincing it—*i.e.*, to be punished for their lies, etc. 13. Though delayed for wise reasons, the utter destruction of the wicked must come at last, and God's presence and power in and for his Church will be known abroad (1 Samuel, 17. 46; Psalm 46. 10, 11). 14, 15. Meanwhile let the rapacious dogs prowl, they cannot hurt the pious; yea, they shall wander famished and sleepless. **grudge if, etc.**—*lit.*, they shall stay all night—*i.e.*, obtain nothing. 16, 17. Contrast the lot of God's servant, who employs his time in God's praise. **sing aloud...in the morning**—when they retire famished and disappointed, or it may denote delightful diligence in praise, as Psalm 30. 5.

## PSALM LX.

**Ver. 1-12.** *Shushan-eduth*—Lily of testimony. The lily is an emblem of beauty (cf. Psalm 45., title). As a description of the Psalm, those terms combined may denote a beautiful poem. **witnessing**—*i.e.*, for God's faithfulness as evinced in the victories referred to in the history cited. *Aram-naharaim*—Syria of the two rivers, or Mesopotamia beyond the river (Euphrates) (2 Samuel, 10. 16). *Aram-zobah*—Syria of Zobah (2 Samuel, 10. 6), to whose king the king of the former was tributary. The war with Edom, by Joab and Abishai (2 Chronicles, 18. 12, 25), occurred about the same time. Probably, while doubts and fears alternately prevailed respecting the issue of these wars, the writer composed this Psalm, in which he depicts, in the language of God's people, their sorrows under former disasters, offers prayer in present straits, and rejoices in confident hope of triumph by God's aid.

1-3. allude to disasters. **cast...off**—in scorn (Psalm 43. 2; 44. 9). **scattered**—broken our strength (cf. 2 Samuel, 5. 20). **O turn thyself**—or, restore to us (prosperity). The figures of physical, denote great civil, commotions (Psalm 46. 2, 3). **drink...wine of astonishment**—*lit.*, of staggering—*i.e.*, made us weak (cf. Psalm 75. 8; Isaiah, 51. 17, 22). 4, 5. Yet to God's banner they will rally, and pray that, led and sustained by His power (right hand, Psalm 17. 7; 20. 6), they may be safe. **hear me**—or, hear us. 6-10. **God hath spoken in** [or, by] **his holiness**—(Psalm 89. 35; Amos, 4. 2), on the pledge of his attributes (Psalm 22. 3; 30. 4). Taking courage from God's promise to give them possession (Exodus, 23. 31; Deuteronomy, 11. 24),

(and perhaps renewed to him by special revelation), with triumphant joy he describes the conquest as already made. **Sechem and . . . Succoth** — as widely separated points, and **Gilead . . . and Manasseh** — as large districts, east and west of Jordan, represent the whole land. **divide . . . and mete out** — means to have entire control over. **Ephraim** — denotes the military (Deuteronomy, 33. 17); and **Judah** — (the law-giver, Genesis, 49. 10), the civil power. Foreign nations are then presented as subdued. **Moab** — is a washpot — the most ordinary vessel. **over [or, at] Edom** — (as a slave), he casts his shoe. **Philistia, triumph . . . [or, rather shout] for me** — acknowledges subjection (cf. Psalm 108. 9), “over Philistia will I triumph”. 9, 10. He feels assured that, though once angry, God is now ready to favour his people. **who will lead me** — or, *who has led me*, as if the work were now begun. **wilt not thou** — or, Is it not thou? 11, 12. Hence he closes with a prayer for success, and an assurance for a hearing.

## PSALM LXI.

**Ver. 1-8.** *Neginah* — or, Neginoth (cf. Psalm 4., title). Separated from his usual spiritual privileges, perhaps by Absalom’s rebellion, the Psalmist prays for divine aid, and, in view of past mercies, with great confidence of being heard.

**1-3. from the end, etc.** — *i.e.*, places remote from the sanctuary (Deuteronomy, 28. 64). **heart is overwhelmed** — *lit.*, covered over with darkness, or, distress. **to the Rock** — (Psalm 18. 2; 40. 2). **higher than I** — which otherwise I cannot ascend. **shelter . . . and strong tower** — repeat the same sentiment. **4. I will abide** — So I desire to do (cf. Psalm 23. 6). **trust in the covert, etc.** — *make* my refuge in the shadow (cf. Psalm 17. 8; 36. 7). **5. the heritage** — or, part in the spiritual blessings of Israel (Psalm 21. 2-4). **vows** — implies prayers. **6, 7. the king** — himself and his royal line ending in Christ. Mercy and truth personified as Psalm 40. 11; 57. 3. **abide before God** — *lit.*, as a king in God’s presence, under his protection. **8.** Thus for new blessings will new vows of praise ever be paid:

## PSALM LXII.

**Ver. 1-12.** *To Jeduthun* — (cf. Psalm 30., title). The general tone of this Psalm is expressive of confidence in God. Occasion is taken to remind the wicked of their sin, their ruin and their meanness.

**1. waiteth** — *lit.*, is silent, trusts submissively and confidently as a servant. **2.** The titles applied to God often occur (Psalm 9. 9; 18. 2). **be greatly moved** — (Psalm 10. 6), no injury shall be permanent, though devised by enemies. **3.** Their destruction will come; as a tottering wall they already are feeble and failing. **bowing wall shall ye be** — better supply *are*. Some propose to apply these phrases to describe the condition of *the man* — *i.e.*, the pious suffer: thus, “Will ye slay him,” etc.; but the other is a good sense. **4. his excellency** — or, elevation, to which God had raised him (Psalm 4. 2). **This they try**



to do by lies and duplicity (Psalm 5. 9). 5, 6. (cf. Psalm 1. 2). **not be moved**—not at all; his confidence has increased. 7. **rock of my strength**—or, strongest support (Psalm 7. 10; 61. 3). 8. **pour out your heart**—give full expression of feeling (1 Samuel, 1. 15; Job 30. 16; Psalm 42. 4). **ye people**—God's people. 9. No kind of men are reliable, compared with God (Isaiah, 2. 22; Jeremiah, 17. 5). **altogether**—alike, one as the other (Psalm 34. 3). 10. Not only are oppression and robbery, which are wicked means of wealth, no grounds of boasting, but even wealth, increasing lawfully, ought not to engross the heart. 11. **once, twice**—as Job, 33. 14; 40. 5), are used to give emphasis to the sentiment. God's power is tempered by His mercy, which it also sustains. 12. **for thou renderest**—*lit., that thou renderest*, etc, connected with "*I heard this*," as the phrase—"**that power**," etc.—teaching that by His power he can show both mercy and justice.

## PSALM LXIII.

**Ver. 1-11.** The historical occasion referred to by the title was probably during Absalom's rebellion (cf. 2 Samuel, 15. 23. 28; 16. 2). David expresses an earnest desire for God's favour, and a confident expectation of realising it in his deliverance, and the ruin of his enemies.

1. **early...seek thee**—earnestly (Isaiah, 26. 9). The figurative terms—**dry and thirsty**—*lit., weary*, denoting moral destitution, suited his outward circumstances. **soul**—and—**flesh**—the whole man (Psalm 16. 9, 10). 2. The special object of desire was God's perfections as displayed in his worship (Psalm 27. 4). 3. Experiencing God's mercy, which exceeds all the blessings of life, his lips will be opened for his praise (Psalm 51. 15). 4. **Thus**—*lit., Truly*. **will I bless**—praise thee (Psalm 34. 1). **lift up my hands**—in worship (cf. Psalm 28. 2). **in thy name**—in praise of thy perfections. 5-8. Full spiritual blessings satisfy his desires, and acts of praise fill his thoughts and time. **night**—as well as day.—Past favours assure him of future, and hence he presses earnestly near to God, whose power sustains him (Psalm 17. 8; 60. 5). 9, 10. **those...to destroy it**—or *lit., to, or, for ruin*—*i.e.*, such as seek to injure me (are) *for ruin*—appointed to it (cf. Psalm 35. 8). **shall go...earth**—into the grave, or, to death; as their bodies are represented as a portion for—**foxes**—*lit., jackals*. 11. **the king**—*i.e.*, David himself, and all who reverence God, "shall share a glorious part," while treacherous foes shall be for ever silenced (Psalm 62. 4).

## PSALM LXIV.

**Ver. 1-10.** A prayer for deliverance from cunning and malicious enemies, with a confident view of their overthrow, which will honour God and give joy to the righteous.

1. **preserve...fear**—as well as the danger producing it. 2. **insurrection**—*lit., uproar*, noisy assaults, as well as their secret counsels. 3-4. similar figures for slander (Psalm 57. 4; 59. 7). **bend**—*lit., tread*. or, prepared. The allusion is to the mode of bending a bow by tread-

ing on it; here, and Psalm 58. 7, transferred to arrows. **the perfect**—one innocent of the charges made (Psalm 18. 23). **and fear not**—(Psalm 55. 19), not regarding God. 5. A sentiment here more fully presented, by depicting their deliberate malice. 6. This is farther evinced by their diligent efforts and deeply laid schemes. 7. The contrast is heightened by representing God as using weapons like theirs. 8. **their . . . tongue to fall, etc.**—*i.e.*, the consequences of their slanders, etc., (cf. Psalm 10. 2; 31. 16). **all that see . . . away**—their partners in evil shall be terrified. 9, 10. Men, generally, will acknowledge God's work, and the righteous, rejoicing in it, shall be encouraged to trust him (Psalm 58. 10).

## PSALM LXV.

**Ver. 1-13.** This is a song of praise for God's spiritual blessings to His people and His kind providence over all the earth.

1. **Praise waiteth for thee**—*lit.*, *To thee silence is praise*, or, (cf. Psalm 62. 1). To thee silence is praise—*i.e.*, Praise is waiting as a servant—it is due to thee. So the last clause expresses the duty of paying vows. These two parts of acceptable worship, mentioned Psalm 50. 14, are rendered in Zion, where God chiefly displays His mercy and receives homage. 2. All are encouraged to pray by God's readiness to hear. 3. God's mercy alone delivers us from the burden of iniquities, by purging or expiating by an atonement the transgressions with which we are charged, and which are denoted by—**iniquities**—or *lit.*, *Words of iniquities*. 4. **dwelt in thy courts . . . [and] satisfied with thy goodness . . . temple**—denote communion with God (Psalm 15. 1; 23. 6; cf. Psalm 5. 7). This is a blessing for all God's people, as denoted by the change of number. 5. **terrible things**—*i.e.*, by the manifestation of justice and wrath to enemies, accompanying that of mercy to his people (Psalm 63. 9-11; 64. 7-9). **the confidence**—object of it. **of all . . . earth**—the whole world—*i.e.*, deservedly such, whether men think so or not. 6-13. God's great power and goodness are the grounds of this confidence. These are illustrated in His control of the mightiest agencies of nature and nations, affecting men with awe and dread (Psalm 26. 7; 98. 1., etc.) and in His fertilising showers, causing the earth to produce abundantly for man and beast. **ontgoings of . . . rejoice**—*all* people from east to west. **visitest**—in mercy (cf. Psalm 8. 4). **river of God**—His exhaustless resources. **thy paths**—ways of providence (Psalm 25. 4, 10). **wilderness**—places, though not inhabited by men, fit for pasture (Leviticus, 16. 21, 22; Job, 24. 5). **pastures**—(in *v.* 12). is *lit.*, *folds*, or, *enclosures for flocks*; and in *v.* 13, it may be *lamb*—the same word used and so translated (Psalm 37. 20); so that "the flocks are clothed with lambs," a figure for abundant increase, would be the form of expression.

## PSALM LXVI.

**Ver. 1-20.** The writer invites all men to unite in praise, cites some striking occasions for it, promises special acts of thanksgiving, and celebrates God's great mercy.

1. **Make . . . noise** — or, Shout. 2. **his name** — as Psalm 29. 2 **make his praise glorious** — *lit.*, *make or place honour, His praise, or as to his His praise, — i.e.*, let His praise be such as will glorify Him, or, be honourable to Him. 3, 4. A specimen of the praise. **How terrible** — (cf. Psalm 65. 8). **submit** — (cf. *Margin*, show a forced subjection (Psalm 18. 44), produced by terror. 5, 6. The terrible works illustrated in Israel's history (Exodus, 14. 21). By this example let rebels be admonished. 7. **behold the nations** — watch their conduct. 8, 9. Here is, perhaps, cited a case of recent deliverance. **holdeth . . . in life** — *lit.*, *putteth our soul in life — i.e.*, out of danger (Psalm 30. 3; 49. 15). **to be moved** — (cf. 10. 6; 55. 22). 10-12. Out of severe trials, God had brought them to safety (cf. Isaiah, 48. 10; 1 Peter, 1. 7). **affliction** — *lit.*, *pressure*, or, as Psalm 55, 2, oppression, which, *laid on the* — *loins* — the seat of strength, (Deuteronomy, 33. 11), enfeebles the frame. **men to ride over our heads** — *made us to pass — through fire, etc.* — figures describing prostration and critical dangers (cf. Isaiah, 43. 2; Ezekiel, 36. 12). **wealthy** — *lit.*, *overflowing*, or, irrigated, and hence fertile. 13-15. These full and varied offerings constitute the payment of vows (Leviticus, 22. 18-23). **I will offer** — *lit. make to ascend* — alluding to the smoke of burnt offering, which explains the use of — **incense** — elsewhere always denoting the fumes of aromatics. 16-20. With these he unites his public thanks, inviting those who fear God (Psalm 60. 4; 61. 5; His true worshippers), to hear. He vindicates his sincerity, inasmuch as God would not hear hypocrites, but had heard him. **he was extolled with my tongue** — *lit.*, *exaltation* (was) *under my tongue*, as a place of deposit, whence it proceeded — *i.e.*, honouring God was habitual. **If I regard iniquity** — *lit.*, *see iniquity with pleasure*.

## PSALM LXVII.

**Ver. 1-7.** A prayer that, by God's blessing on His people, His salvation and praise may be extended over the earth.

1. **cause his face to shine** — show us favour (Numbers, 6. 24, 25; Psalm 31. 16). 2. **thy way** — of gracious dealing (Isaiah, 55. 8), as explained by — **saving health** — or *lit.*, *salvation*. 3-5. *Thanks* will be rendered for the blessings of his wise and holy government (cf. Isaiah, 2. 3, 4; 11. 4). 6, 7. The blessings of a fruitful harvest are mentioned as types of greater and spiritual blessings, under which all nations shall fear and love God.

## PSALM LXVIII.

**Ver. 1-35.** This is a *Psalm-song* (cf. Psalm 30. title), perhaps suggested by David's victories, which secured his throne and gave rest to the nation. In general terms, the judgment of God on the wicked, and the equity and goodness of His government to the pious are celebrated. The sentiment is illustrated by examples of God's dealings, cited from the Jewish history, and related in highly poetical terms. Hence the writer intimates an expectation of equal and even greater triumphs, and summons all nations to unite in praises of the God of Israel. **The**

Psalm is typical of the relation which God, in the person of His Son, sustains to the Church (cf. v. 18).

1-3. Cf. Numbers, 10. 35; Psalm 1. 4; 22. 14, on the figures here used. **before him** — a sin v. 2, *from* His presence, as dreaded; but in v. 3, *in* His presence, as under His protection (Psalm 61. 7). **the righteous** — all truly pious, whether of Israel or not. 4. **extol him . . . heavens** — *lit.*, “*cast up for Him who rideth in the deserts, or wilderness*” (cf. v. 7), alluding to the poetical representation of His leading His people in the wilderness as a conqueror, before whom a way is to be prepared, or *cast up* (cf. Isaiah, 40. 3; 62. 10). **by his name JAH** — or, Jehovah, of which it is a contraction (Exodus, 15. 3; Isaiah, 12. 2), (*Hebrew*). **name** — or, perfections (Psalm 9. 10; 20. 1), which 5, 6, are illustrated by the protection to the helpless, vindication of the innocent, and punishment of rebels, ascribed to Him. **setteth the solitary in families** — *lit.*, *setteth the lonely* (as wanderers) *at home*. Though a general truth, there is perhaps allusion to the wandering and settlement of the Israelites. **rebellious dwell in a dry land** — removed from all the comforts of home. 7, 8. (Cf. Exodus, 19. 16-18). **thou wentest** — in the pillar of fire. **thou didst march** — *lit.*, *in thy tread*, thy majestic movement. **even Sinai itself** — *lit.*, *that Sinai*, as Judges, 5. 5. 9, 10. **a plentiful rain** — a rain of gifts, as manna and quails. **thy congregation** — *lit.*, *troop*, as Samuel, 23. 11, 13, — the military aspect of the people being prominent, according to the figures of the context. **therein** — *i.e.*, in the land of promise. **the poor** — thy humble people, (v. 9. cf. Psalm 10. 17; 12. 5). 11. **gave the word** — *i.e.*, of triumph. **company** — or, choir of females, celebrating victory (Exodus, 15. 20). 12. **kings of armies** — *i.e.*, with their armies. **she that . . . at home** — mostly females so remained, and the ease of victory appears in that such, without danger, quietly enjoyed the spoils. 13. Some translate this, “When ye shall lie between the borders ye shall,” etc., comparing the peaceful rest in the borders or limits of the promised land to the proverbial beauty of a gentle dove. Others understand by the word rendered “pots,” the smoked sides of caves, in which the Israelites took refuge from enemies in the times of the judges: or, taking the whole figuratively, the rows of stones on which cooking vessels were hung; and thus that a contrast is drawn between their former low and afflicted state and their succeeding prosperity. In either case, a state of quiet and peace is described by a beautiful figure. 14. Their enemies dispersed, the contrast of their prosperity with their former distress is represented by that of the snow with the dark and sombre shades of Salmon. 15, 16. Mountains are often symbols of nations (Psalm 46. 2; 55. 6). That of Bashan, N. E., of Palestine, denotes a heathen nation, which is described as a *hill of God*, or a great hill. Such are represented as envious of the hill (Zion) on which God resides; 17, and, to the assertion of God’s purpose to make it His dwelling, is added evidence of His protecting care. He is described as in the midst of His heavenly armies — **thousands of angels** — *lit.*, *thousands of repetitions*, or, thousands of thousands — *i.e.*, of chariots. The word — **angels** — was perhaps introduced in our version from Deuteronomy, 33. 2, and Galatians, 3. 19. They are, of course, implied as conductors of the chariots. **as . . . Sinai, in the holy place** — *i.e.*, He has appeared in

Zion as once in Sinai. 18. From the scene of conquest He ascends to His throne, leading — **captivity** [or, many captives (Judges, 5. 12),] **captive. received gifts for men** — accepting their homage, even when forced, as that of rebels. **that the Lord God might dwell** — or, *lit., to dwell, oh Lord God* (cf. *v.* 16), — *i.e.*, to make this hill, His people, or church, His dwelling. This Psalm typifies the conquests of the Church under her divine leader, Christ. He, indeed, “who was with the church in the wilderness” (Acts, 7. 38), is the *Lord*, described in this ideal ascension. Hence Paul (Ephesians, 4. 8), applies this language to describe His real ascension, when, having conquered sin, death, and hell, the Lord of glory triumphantly entered heaven, attended by throngs of adoring angels, to sit on the throne and wield the sceptre of an eternal dominion. The phrase — **received gifts for** [or, *lit., among*] **men** — is by Paul, “gave gifts to men.” Both describe the acts of a conqueror who receives and distributes spoils. The Psalmist uses “*receiving*” as evincing the success, Paul “*gave*” as the act of the conqueror, who having subdued his enemies, proceeds to reward his friends. The special application of the passage by Paul was in proof of Christ’s exaltation. What the Old Testament represents of His descending and ascending corresponds with His history. He who descended is the same who has ascended. As then, ascension was an element of His triumph, so is it now; and He, who, in His humiliation, must be recognised as our vicarious sacrifice and the High Priest of our profession, must also be adored as Head of His Church and author of all her spiritual benefits. 19-21. God daily and fully supplies us. The issues or escapes from death are under His control, who is the God that saves us, and destroys His and our enemies? **wound the head** — or, violently destroy (Numbers, 24. 8; Psalm 110. 6). **goeth on still in . . . trespasses** — perseveringly impenitent. 22. Former examples of God’s deliverance are generalised: as He has done so He will do. **from Bashan** — the farthest region; and **depths of the sea** — the severest afflictions. Out of all, God will bring them. The figures of *v.* 23 denote completeness of the conquest, not implying any savage cruelty (cf. 2 Kings, 9. 36; Isaiah, 63. 1-6; Jeremiah, 15. 3). 24-27. The triumphal procession, after the deliverance, is depicted. **they have seen** — impersonally, “There have been seen.” **the goings of my God** — as leading the procession, the ark, the symbol of His presence, being in front. The various bands of music (*v.* 25), follow, and all who are — **from** [or, *lit., of*] **the fountain of Israel** — *i.e.*, lineal descendants of Jacob, are invited to unite in the doxology. Then by one of the nearest tribes, one of the most eminent, and two of the most remote, are represented the whole nation of Israel, passing forward (Numbers, 7.). 28, 29. Thanks for the past, and confident prayer for the future, victories of Zion are mingled in a song of praise. **thy temple at** [or *lit., over*] **Jerusalem** — His place of residence (Psalm 5. 7), symbolised His protecting presence among His people, and hence is the object of homage on the part of others. 30. The strongest nations are represented by the strongest beasts (cf. *Margin*). 31. **princes** — or *lit., Fat ones*, the most eminent from the most wealthy, and the most nation, represent the universal subjection. **stretch out** [or, *make to run*] **her hands** — denoting haste. 32-36. To Him who is presented as riding in triumph through his ancient

heavens and proclaiming His presence — to Him who, in nature, and still more in the wonders of His spiritual government, out of *His holy place* (Psalm 43. 3), is terrible, who rules His Church, and, by His Church, rules the world in righteousness — let all nations and kingdoms give honour and power and dominion evermore!

## PSALM LXIX.

**Ver. 1-36.** *Upon Shoshannim* — (cf. Psalm 45. title). Mingling the language of prayer and complaint, the sufferer, whose condition is here set forth, pleads for God's help as one suffering in His cause, implores the divine retribution on his malicious enemies, and, viewing his deliverance as sure, promises praise by himself, and others, to whom God will extend like blessings. This Psalm is referred to seven times in the New Testament as prophetic of Christ and the gospel times. Although the character, in which the Psalmist appears to some in *v.* 5, is that of a sinner, yet his *condition* as a *sufferer* innocent of alleged crimes sustains the *typical* character of the composition, and it may be therefore regarded throughout, as the 22d, as typically expressive of the feelings of our Saviour in the flesh.

**1, 2.** (Cf. Psalm 40. 2). **come in unto my soul** — *lit.*, *come even to my soul*, endanger my life by drowning (Jonah, 2. 5). **3.** (Cf. Psalm 6. 6). **mine eyes fail** — in watching (Psalm 119. 82). **4. hate me, etc.** — (cf. John, 15. 25). On the number and power of his enemies cf. Psalm 40. **12. then I restored . . . away** — *i.e.*, he suffered wrongfully under the imputation of robbery. This may be regarded as an appeal, vindicating his innocence, as if he had said, "If sinful, thou knowest," etc. Though *David's condition* as a *sufferer* may *typify* Christ's, without requiring that a parallel be found in *character*. **6. for my sake** — *lit.*, *in me*, in my confusion and shame. **7-12.** This plea contemplates his relation to God, as a sufferer in his cause. Reproach, domestic estrangement (Mark, 3. 21; John, 7. 5), exhaustion in God's service (John, 2. 17), revilings and taunts of base men were the sufferings. **wept (and chastened) my soul** — *lit.*, *wept away my soul*, a strongly figurative description of deep grief. **sit in the gate** — public place (Proverbs, 31. 31). **13-15.** With increasing reliance on God, he prays for help, describing his distress in the figures of *v.* 1, 2. **16-18.** These earnest terms are often used, and the address to God, as indifferent or averse, is found in Psalm 3. 7; 22. 24; 27. 9, etc. **19, 20.** Calling God to witness his distress, he presents its aggravation produced by the want of sympathising friends (cf. Isaiah, 63. 5; Mark, 14. 50). **21.** Instead of such, his enemies increase his pain by giving him most distasteful food and drink. The Psalmist may have thus described by figure what Christ found in reality (cf. John, 19. 29, 30). **22, 23.** With unimportant verbal changes, this language is used by Paul to describe the rejection of the Jews who refused to receive the Saviour (Romans, 11. 9, 10). The purport of the figures used is, that blessings shall become curses, the *table* of joy (as one of food) a *snares*, their *welfare*, *lit.*, *peaceful condition*, or security, a *trap*. Darkened eyes and failing strength complete the picture of the ruin falling on them under the invoked retribution. **continually to**

**shake**—*lit.*, to *swerve*, or, *bend*, in weakness. 24, 25. An utter desolation awaits them. They will not only be driven from their homes, but their homes—or *lit.*, *palaces*, indicative of wealth—shall be desolate (cf. Matthew, 23. 38). 26. Though smitten of God (Isaiah, 53. 4), men were not less guilty in persecuting the sufferer (Acts, 2. 23). **talk to the grief**—in respect to, about it, implying derision and taunts. **wounded**—or *lit.*, *mortally wounded*. 27, 28. **iniquity**—or, punishment (Psalm 4. 12). **come...righteousness**—partake of its benefits. **book of the living**—or, *life*, with the next clause, a figurative mode of representing those saved, as having their names in a register (cf. Exodus, 32. 32; Isaiah, 4. 3). 29. **poor and sorrowful**—the afflicted pious, often denoted by such terms (cf. Psalm 10. 17; 12. 5). **set me...high**—out of danger. 30, 31. Spiritual are better than mere material offerings (Psalm 40. 6; 50. 8); hence a promise of the former, and rather contemptuous terms are used of the latter. 32, 33. Others shall rejoice. *Humble* and *poor*, as *v.* 29. **your heart, etc.**—address to such (cf. Psalm 22. 26). **prisoners**—peculiarly liable to be despised. 34-36. The call on the universe for praise is well sustained by the prediction of the perpetual and extended blessings which shall come upon the covenant people of God. Though, as usual, the imagery is taken from terms used of Palestine, the whole tenor of the context indicates that the spiritual privileges and blessings of the Church are meant.

## PSALM LXX.

**Ver. 1-5.** This corresponds with Psalm 40. 13-17 with a very few variations, as “turn back” (*v.* 3) for “desolate,” and “make haste unto me” (*v.* 5) for “thinketh upon me.” It forms a suitable appendix to the preceding, and is called “a Psalm to bring to remembrance,” as the 38th.

## PSALM LXXI.

**Ver. 1-24.** The Psalmist, probably in old age, appeals to God for help from his enemies, pleading his past favours, and stating his present need, and, in confidence of a hearing, promises his grateful thanks and praise.

1-3. (Cf. Psalm 30. 1-3). **rock...fortress**—(Psalm 18. 2). **given commandment**—*lit.*, *ordained*, as Psalm 44. 4; 68. 28. 4, 5. **cruel man**—corrupt and ill-natured—*lit.*, *sour*. **trust**—place of trust. 6-9. His history from early infancy illustrated God's care, and his wonderful deliverances were at once occasions of praise and ground of confidence for the future. **my praise...of thee**—*lit.*, *in*, or, *by thee* (Psalm 22. 25). 10, 11. The craft and malicious taunts of his enemies now led him to call for aid (cf. on the terms used, 2 Samuel, 17. 12; Psalm 3. 2; 7. 2). 12. (Cf. Psalm 22, 19; 40. 4). 13. (Cf. Psalm 35. 4; 40. 14). 14-16. The ruins of his enemies, as illustrating God's faithfulness, is his deliverance, and a reason for future confidence. **for I know...thereof**—innumerable, as he had not time to count them. **in the strength, etc.**—or, relying on it. **thy righteousness**—or, faithful

performance of promises to the pious (Psalm 7. 17; 31. 1). 17-21. Past experience again encourages. **taught me, etc.** — by providential dealings. **is very high** — distinguished (Psalm 36. 5; Isaiah, 55. 9). **depths of the earth** — debased, low condition. **increase, etc.** — *i.e.*, the great things done for me (*v.* 19), (*cf.* Psalm 40. 5). 22-24. To the occasions of praise, he now adds the promise to render it. **will . . . praise** — *lit.*, *will thank*. **even thy truth** — as to thy truth or faithfulness.

## PSALM LXXII.

**Ver. 1-19.** *For, or lit., of Solomon.* The closing verse rather relates to the 2d book of Psalms, of which this is the last, and was perhaps added by some collector, to intimate that the collection, to which, as chief author, David's name was appended, was closed. In this view, these may consistently be the productions of others included, as of Asaph, Sons of Korah, and Solomon; and a few of David's may be placed in the latter series. The fact, that here the usual mode of denoting authorship is used, is strongly conclusive that Solomon was the author, especially as no stronger objection appears than what has been now set aside. The Psalm, in highly wrought figurative style, describes the reign of a king, as "righteous, universal, beneficent, and perpetual." By the older Jewish and most modern Christian interpreters, it has been referred to Christ, whose reign, present and prospective, alone corresponds with its statements. As the imagery of the 2d Psalm was drawn from the martial character of David's reign, that of this is from the peaceful and prosperous state of Solomon's.

**1. Give the king, etc.** — a prayer which is equivalent to a prediction. **judgments** — the acts, and (figuratively) the principles, of a right government (John, 5. 22; 9. 39). **righteousness** — qualifications for conducting such a government. **king's son** — same person as king — a very proper title for Christ, as such in both natures. **2. etc.** The effects of such a government by one thus endowed are detailed. **the people . . . and thy poor** — or, *meek*, the pious subjects of his government. **3. As mountains and hills** are not usually productive, they are here selected to show the abundance of peace, being represented as — **bringing** — or *lit.*, *bearing* it as a produce. **by righteousness** — *i.e.*, by means of his eminently just and good methods of ruling. **4.** That peace, including prosperity, as an eminent characteristic of Christ's reign (Isaiah, 2. 4; 9. 6; 11. 9), will be illustrated in the security provided for the helpless and needy, and the punishment inflicted on oppressors, whose power to injure or mar the peace of others, will be destroyed (*cf.* Isaiah, 65. 25; Zechariah, 9. 10). **children of the needy** — for the needy (*cf.* sons of strangers, Psalm 18. 45). **5. as long as . . . endure** — *lit.*, *with the sun*, coeval with its existence, and *before, or, in presence of the moon*, while it lasts (*cf.* Genesis, 11. 28, *before Terah, lit., in presence of*, while he lived). **6.** A beautiful figure expresses the *grateful* nature of His influence; **7.** and, carrying out the figure, the results are described in an abundant production. **the righteous** — *lit.*, *righteousness*. **flourish** — *lit.*, *spout*, or, *spring forth*. **8.** The foreign nations mentioned (*v.* 9, 10) could not be included in the limits, if designed to indicate the boundaries of Solo-



mon's kingdom. The terms, though derived from those used (Exodus, 23. 31; Deuteronomy, 11. 24) to denote the possessions of Israel, must have a wider sense. Thus, "ends of the earth" is never used of Palestine, but always of the world (cf. *Margin*). 9-11. The extent of the conquests. **they that dwell in the wilderness** — the wild untutored tribes of deserts. **bow . . . dust** — in profound submission. The remotest and wealthiest nations shall acknowledge him (cf. Psalm 45. 12). 12-14. These are not the conquests of arms, but the influences of humane and peaceful principles (cf. Isaiah, 9. 7; 11. 1-9; Zechariah, 9. 9, 10). 15. In his prolonged life, he will continue to receive the honourable gifts of the rich, and the prayers of his people shall be made for him, and their praises given to him. 16. The spiritual blessings, as often in Scripture, are set forth by material, the abundance of which is described by a figure, in which a *handful* (or *lit.*, a *piece*, or small portion) of corn in the most unpropitious locality, shall produce a crop, waving in the wind in its luxuriant growth, like the forests of Lebanon. **they of the city . . . earth** — This clause denotes the rapid and abundant increase of population — **of [or, from] the city** — Jerusalem, the centre and seat of the typical kingdom. **flourish** — or, glitter as new grass — *i.e.*, bloom. This increase corresponds with the increased productiveness. So, as the gospel blessings are diffused, there shall arise increasing recipients of them, out of the Church in which Christ resides as head. 17. **His name** — or, glorious perfections. **as long as the sun** — (cf. *v.* 5). **men shall be blessed** — (Genesis, 12. 3; 18. 18). 18, 19. These words close the Psalm in terms consistent with the style of the context, while 20 is evidently, from its prosaic style, and addition for the purpose above explained. **ended** — *lit.*, *finished*, or completed; the word never denotes fulfilment, except in a very late usage, as Ezra, 1. 1; Daniel, 12. 7.

## PSALM LXXIII.

**Ver. 1-28.** *Of Asaph* — (cf. *Introduction*). *God is good to His people.* For although the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, tempted the Psalmist to misgivings of God's government, yet the sudden and fearful ruin of the ungodly, seen in the light of God's revelation, re-assures his heart, and, chiding himself for his folly, he is led to confide renewedly in God, and celebrates His goodness and love.

1. The abrupt announcement of the theme indicates that it is the conclusion of a perplexing mental conflict, which is then detailed (cf. Jeremiah, 12. 1-4). **truly** — or, surely it is so. **clean heart** — (Psalm 18. 26) describes the true Israel. 2. The figures express his wavering faith, by terms denoting tottering and weakness (cf. Psalm 22. 5; 62. 3). 3-9. The prosperous wicked are insolently proud (cf. Psalm 5. 5). They die, as well as live, free from perplexities. pride adorns them, and violence is their clothing; indeed, they are inflated with unexpected successes. With all this — **they are corrupt** — or, *lit.*, *they deride*, they speak maliciously and arrogantly, and invade even heaven with blasphemy (Revelation, 13. 6), and cover earth with slanders (Job, 21. 7-14). 10-12. Hence God's people are confounded, turned hither (or back) and

thither, perplexed with doubts of God's knowledge and care, and filled with sorrow. **prosper in the world**—*lit., secure for ever.* 13, 14. The Psalmist, partaking of these troubles, is especially disturbed in view of his own case, that with all his diligent efforts for a holy life, he is still sorely tried. 15. Freed from idiomatic phrases, this verse expresses a supposition, as, "Had I thus spoken, I should," etc., intimating that he had kept his troubles to himself. **generation of thy children**—thy people (1 John, 3. 1). **offend**—*lit., deceive, mislead.* 16, 17. Still he—**thought**—*lit., studied,* or, pondered this riddle; but in vain: it remained a toil (cf. *Margin*), till he—**went into the sanctuary**—to inquire (cf. Exodus, 25. 22; Psalm 5. 7; 27. 4). 18-20. *Their end,* or, *future* (Psalm 37. 37, 38), which is dismal and terribly sudden (Proverbs, 1. 27; 29. 1), aggravated and hastened by terror. As one despises an unsubstantial dream, so God, waking up to judgment (Psalm 7. 6; 44. 23), despises their vain shadow of happiness (Psalm 39. 6; Isaiah, 29. 7). They are thrown into ruins as a building falling to pieces (Psalm 74. 3). 21, 22. He confesses how—**foolish**—*lit., stupid,* and—**ignorant**—*lit., not discerning,* had been his course of thought. **before thee**—*lit., with thee,* in conduct respecting thee. 23. Still he was *with God*, as a dependent beneficiary, and so kept from falling (*v.* 2). 24. All doubts are silenced in confidence of divine guidance and future glory. **receive me to glory**—*lit., take for (me) glory* (cf. Psalm 68. 18; Ephesians, 4. 8). 25, 26. God is his only satisfying good. **strength**—*lit., rock* (Psalm 18. 2). **portion**—(Psalm 16. 5; Lamentations, 3. 24). 27, 28. The lot of apostates described by a figure of frequent use (Jeremiah, 3. 1-3; Ezekiel, 23. 35), is contrasted with his, who finds happiness in nearness to God (James, 4. 8), and his delightful work the declaration of His praise.

## PSALM LXXIV.

**Ver. 1-23.** If the historical allusions of *v.* 6-8, etc., be referred, as is probable, to the period of the captivity, the author was probably a descendant and namesake of Asaph, David's cotemporary and singer (cf. 2 Chronicles, 35. 15; Ezra, 2. 41). He complains of God's desertion of His Church, and appeals for aid, encouraging himself by recounting some of God's mighty deeds, and urges his prayer on the ground of God's covenant relation to His people, and the wickedness of His and their common enemy.

1. **cast. . . off**—with abhorrence (cf. Psalm 43. 2; 44. 9). There is no disavowal of guilt implied. The figure of fire to denote God's anger is often used; and here, and Deuteronomy, 29. 20, by the word "*smoke,*" suggests its continuance. **sheep. . . pasture**—(cf. Psalm 80. 1; 95. 7). 2. The terms to denote God's relation to His people increase in force: "congregation"—"purchased"—"redeemed"—"Zion," His dwelling. 3. **lift. . . feet**—(Genesis, 29. 1)—*i.e.,* Come (to behold) the desolations (Psalms 73. 19). 4. **roar**—with bestial fury. **congregations**—*lit., worshipping assemblies.* **ensigns**—*lit., signs,* substituted their idolatrous objects, or tokens of authority, for those articles of the temple which denoted God's presence. 5, 6. Though some terms and clauses

here are very obscure, the general sense is, that the spoilers destroyed the beauties of the temple with the violence of woodmen. **was famous** — *lit.*, *was known*. **carved work** — (1 Kings, 6. 29). **thereof** — *i.e.*, of the temple, in the writer's mind, though not expressed till *v.* 7, in which its utter destruction by fire is mentioned (2 Kings, 25. 9; Isaiah, 64. 11). **defiled** — or, profaned, as Psalm 89. 39. 8. **together** — *at once*, all alike. **synagogues** — *lit.*, *assemblies*, for places of assembly, whether such as schools of the prophets (2 Kings, 4. 23), or *synagogues* in the usual sense, there is much doubt. 9. **signs** — of God's presence, as altar, ark, etc. (cf. *v.* 4; 2 Chronicles, 36. 18, 19; Daniel, 5. 2). **no more any prophet** — (Isaiah, 3. 2; Jeremiah, 40. 1; 43. 6). **how long** — this is to last. Jeremiah's prophecy (25. 11), if published, may not have been generally known or understood. To the bulk of the people, during the captivity, the occasional and local prophetic services of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, would not make an exception to the clause, "*there is no more any prophet.*" 10. (cf. Psalm 31. 1). **how long . . . reproach** — us as deserted of God. **blaspheme thy name** — or, perfections, as power, goodness, etc. (Psalm 29. 2). 11. Why cease to help us? (Cf. Psalm 3. 7; 7. 6; 60. 5). 12. **for** — *lit.*, *And*, in an adversative sense. 13-15. Examples of the "*salvation wrought*" are cited. **divide the sea** — *i.e.*, *Red Sea*. **brakest . . . waters** — Pharaoh and his host (cf. Isaiah, 51. 9, 10; Ezekiel, 29. 3, 4). **heads of leviathan** — the word is a collective, and so used for many. **the people . . . wilderness** — *i.e.*, wild beasts, as *conies* (Proverbs, 30. 25, 26), are called a people. Others take the passages literally, that the sea monsters thrown out on dry land were food for the wandering Arabs. **cleave the fountain** — *i.e.*, the rocks of *Horeb* and *Kadesh* — for fountains. **driedst up** — Jordan, and, perhaps, Arnon and Jabbok (Numbers, 21. 14). 16, 17. The fixed orders of nature and bounds of earth are of God. 18. (cf. *v.* 10; Deuteronomy, 32. 6). The contrast is striking — that such a God should be thus insulted! 19. **multitude** — *lit.*, *beast*, their flock, or company of men (Psalm 68. 10). **turtle-dove** — *i.e.*, the meek and lonely Church. **congregation** — *lit.*, *company*, as above — thus the Church is represented as the spoiled and defeated remnant of an army, exposed to violence. 20. And the prevalence of injustice in heathen lands is a reason for invoking God's regard to His promise (cf. Numbers, 14. 21; Psalm 7. 16; 18. 48). 21. **oppressed** — broken (Psalm 9. 9). **return** — from seeking God. **ashamed** — (Psalm 35. 4). 22, 23. (cf. Psalm 3. 7; 7. 6). God hears the wicked to their own ruin (Genesis, 4. 10; 18. 20).

## PSALM LXXV.

**Ver. 1-10.** *Al-taschith* — (cf. Psalm 57. title). In impending danger, the Psalmist, anticipating relief in view of God's righteous government, takes courage and renders praise.

1. God's name or perfections are set forth by His wondrous works. 2, 3. These verses express the purpose of God to administer a just government, and in a time of anarchy that He sustains the nation. Some apply the words to the Psalmist. **receive the congregation** — *lit.*, *take a*

set time (Psalm 102. 13; Hosea, 2. 3).. or an assembly at a set time — *i.e.* for judging. *Pillars of earth* — (I Samuel 2. 8). 4-8. Here the writer speaks in view of God's declaration, warning the wicked. **lift... up the horn** — to exalt power. here, of the wicked himself — *i.e.*, to be arrogant or self-elated. **speak... neck** — insolently. **promotion** — *lit.*, a lifting up. God is the only right judge of merit. **in the hand... a cup... red** — God's wrath is often thus represented (cf. Isaiah, 51. 17; Jeremiah, 25. 15). **but the dregs** — *lit.*, surely the dregs, they shall drain it. 9, 10. Contrasted is the lot of the pious who will praise God, and, acting under his direction, will destroy the power of the wicked, and exalt that of the righteous.

## PSALM LXXVI.

**Ver. 1-12.** *On Neginoth* — (cf. Psalm 4. title). This Psalm commemorates what the preceding anticipates; God's deliverance of His people by a signal interposition of power against their enemies. The occasion was probably the events narrated 2 Kings, 19. 35; Isaiah, 37. (Cf. Psalm 46.).

1, 2. These well-known terms denote God's people and Church and His intimate and glorious relations them. **Salem** — (Genesis, 14. 18) is Jerusalem. 3. **brake the... arrows** — *lit.*, thunderbolts (Psalm 78. 48), from their rapid flight or ignition (cf. Psalm 18. 14; Ephesians, 6. 16). **the battle** — for arms (Hosea, 2. 18). 4. **thou** — God. **mountains of prey** — great victorious nations, as Assyria (Isaiah, 41. 15; Ezekiel, 38. 11, 12; Zechariah, 4. 7). 5. **slept their sleep** — died (Psalm 13. 3). **none... found... hands** — are powerless. 6. **chariots and horse** — for those fighting on them (cf. Psalm 68. 17). 7. **may... sight** — contend with thee (Deuteronomy, 9. 5; Joshua, 7. 12). 8, 9. God's judgment on the wicked is His people's deliverance (Psalm 9. 12; 10. 17). 10. Man's wrath praises God by its futility before His power. **restrain** — or, gird — *i.e.*, thyself, as with a sword, with which to destroy, or as an ornament to thy praise. 11, 12. Invite homage to such a God (2 Chronicles, 32. 23), who can stop the breath of princes when he will (Daniel, 5. 23).

## PSALM LXXVII.

**Ver. 1-20.** *To Jeduthun* — (cf. Psalm 39. title). In a time of great affliction, when ready to despair, the Psalmist derives relief from calling to mind God's former and wonderful works of delivering power and grace.

1. Expresses the purport of Psalm, 2. his importunacy. **my sore ran... night** — *lit.*, my hand was spread, or, stretched out (cf. Psalm 44. 20). **ceased not** — *lit.*, grew not numb, or, feeble (Genesis, 45. 26; Psalm 38. 8). **my soul... comforted** — (cf. Genesis, 37. 35; Jeremiah, 31. 15). 3-9. His sad state contrasted with former joys. **was troubled** — *lit.*, violently agitated, or, disquieted (Psalm 39. 6; 42. 5). **my spirit was overwhelmed** — or, fainted (Psalm 107. 5; Jonah, 2. 7). **holdest**

... **waking** — or, fast, that I cannot sleep. Thus he is led to express his anxious feelings in several earnest questions indicative of impatient sorrow. 10. Omitting the supplied words, we may read, "This is my affliction — the years of," etc.— years being taken as parallel to affliction (cf. Psalm 90. 15), as of God's ordering. 11, 12 He finds relief in contrasting God's former deliverances. Shall we receive good at His hands, and not evil? Both are orderings of unerring mercy and unfailing love. 13. **thy way...in the sanctuary** — God's ways of grace and providence (Psalm 22. 3; 67. 2), ordered on holy principles, as developed in His worship; or implied in His perfections, if *holiness* be used for *sanctuary*, as some prefer translating (cf. Exodus, 15. 11). 14-20. Illustrations of God's power in His special interventions for His people (Exodus, 14), and, in the more common, but sublime, control of nature (Psalm 22. 11-14; Habakkuk, 3. 14), which may have attended those miraculous events (Exodus, 14. 24). **Jacob and Joseph** — representing all. **footsteps...waters** — may refer to His actual leading the people through the sea, though also expressing the mysteries of providence.

## PSALM LXXVIII.

**Ver. 1-72.** This Psalm appears to have been occasioned by the removal of the sanctuary from Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim to Zion in the tribe of Judah, and the coincident transfer of pre-eminence in Israel from the former to the latter tribe, as clearly evinced by David's settlement as the head of the Church and nation. Though this was the execution of God's purpose, the writer here shows that it also proceeded from the divine judgment on Ephraim, under whose leadership the people had manifested the same sinful and rebellious character which had distinguished their ancestors in Egypt.

**1. my people.. my law** — the language of a religious teacher (*v.* 2; Lamentations, 3. 14; Romans, 2. 16, 27; cf. Psalm 49. 4). The history which follows was a "dark saying," or riddle, if left unexplained, and its right apprehension required wisdom and attention. 3-8. This history had been handed down (Exodus, 12. 14; Deuteronomy, 6. 20) for God's honour, and that the principles of His law might be known and observed by posterity. This important sentiment is reiterated in (*v.* 7, 8) negative form. **testimony** — (Psalm 19. 7). **stubborn and rebellious** — (Deuteronomy, 21. 18). **set not their heart** — on God's service (2 Chronicles, 12. 14). 9-11. The privileges of the first-born which belonged to Joseph (1 Chronicles, 5. 1, 2) were assigned to Ephraim by Jacob (Genesis, 48. 1). The supremacy of the tribe thus intimated was recognised by its position (in the marching of the nation to Canaan) next to the ark (Numbers, 2. 18-24), by the selection of the first permanent locality for the ark within its borders at Shiloh, and by the extensive and fertile province given for its possession. Traces of this prominence remained after the schism under Rehoboam, in the use by later writers, of *Ephraim* for *Israel* (cf. Hosea, 5. 3-14; 11. 3-12). Though a strong, well armed tribe, and, from an early period, emulous and haughty (cf. Joshua, 17. 14; Judges, 8. 1-3; 2 Samuel, 19. 41), it appears, in this place, that it had rather led the rest in cowardice than

courage; and had incurred God's displeasure, because, diffident of His promise, though often heretofore fulfilled, it had failed as a leader to carry out the terms of the covenant, by driving out the heathen (Exodus, 23. 24; Deuteronomy, 31. 16; 2 Kings, 17. 15). 12-14. A record of God's dealings and the sins of the people is now made. The writer gives the history from the exode to the retreat from Kadesh; then contrasts their sins with their reasons for confidence, shown by a detail of God's dealings in Egypt and presents a summary of the subsequent history to David's time. **Zoan**—for Egypt, as its ancient capital (Numbers, 13. 22, Isaiah, 19. 11). 15, 16. There were two similar miracles (Exodus, 17. 6; Numbers, 20. 11). **great depths**—and—**rivers**—denote abundance. 17-20. **yet more**—*lit., added to sin*, instead of being led to repentance. (Romans, 2. 4). **in their heart**—(Matthew, 15. 19). **for their lust**—*lit., soul*, or, *desire*. **provoking**—and—**tempted**—illustrated by their absurd doubts. 19, 20, in the face of His admitted power. 21. **fire**—the effect of the *anger* (Numbers, 11. 1). 22. (Cf. Hebrews, 8. 8, 9). 23-29. (Cf. Exodus, 16.; Numbers, 11.). **angel's food**—*lit., bread of the mighty* (cf. Psalm 105. 40); so called, as it came from heaven. **meat**—*lit., victuals*, as for a journey. **their desire**—what they longed for. 30, 31. **not estranged... lust**—or, *desire*—*i.e.*, were indulging it. **slew... fattest**—or, among the fattest; some of them—**chosen**—the young and strong (Isaiah, 40. 31), and so none could resist. 33-39. Though there were partial reformations after chastisement, and God, in pity, withdrew His hand for a time, yet their general conduct was rebellious and He was thus provoked to waste and destroy them, by long and fruitless wandering in the desert. **lied... tongues**—a feigned obedience (Psalm 18. 44). **heart... not right**—or, firm (cf. *v.* 8; Psalm 51. 10). **a wind... again**—*lit., a breath*, thin air (cf. Psalm 103; James, 4. 14). 40, 41. There were ten temptations (Numbers, 14. 22). **limited**—as *v.* 19, 20. Though some prefer *grieved* or *provoked*. The retreat from Kadesh (Deuteronomy, 1. 19-23) is meant, whether—**turned**—be for turning back, or to denote repetition of offence. 43. **wrought**—set or held forth. 45. The dog-fly or the mosquito. 46. **caterpillar**—the *Hebrew* name, from its voracity, and that of—**locust**—from its multitude. 47, 48. The additional effects of the storm here mentioned (cf. Exodus, 9. 23-34) are consistent with Moses' account. **gave.. cattle**—*lit., shut up* (cf. Psalm 31. 8). 49. **evil angels**—or, angels of evil—many were perhaps employed, and other evils inflicted. 50, 51. **made away**—removed obstacles, gave it full scope. **chief of their strength**—*lit., first-fruits*, or, *first-born* (Genesis, 49. 3; Deuteronomy, 21. 17). **Ham**—one of whose sons gave name (*Mizraim, Hebrew*) to Egypt. 52-54, **made his... forth**—or, brought them by periodical journeys (cf. Exodus, 15. 1). **border of his sanctuary**—or, holy border—*i.e.*, region of which—**this mountain**—(Zion) was, as the seat of civil and religious government, the representative, used for the whole land, as afterwards for the Church (Isaiah, 25. 6, 7). **purchased**—or, procured by his right hand or power (Psalm 60. 5). 55. **by line**—or, the portion thus measured. **divided them**—*i.e.*, the heathen, put for their possessions, so **tents**—*i.e.*, of the heathen (cf. Deuteronomy, 6. 11). 56. 57. **a deceitful bow**—which turns back, and so fails to project the arrow (2 Samuel, 1. 22;

Hosea, 7. 16). They relapsed. 58. Idolatry resulted from sparing the heathen (cf. *v.* 9-11). 59, 60. **heard**—perceived (Genesis, 11. 7). **abhorred**—but not utterly. **tent. . . placed**—*lit., caused to dwell*, set up (Joshua, 18. 1). 61. **his strength**—the ark, as symbolical of it (Psalm 96. 6). 62. **gave**—or, shut up. **his people**—(*v.* 48; 1 Samuel, 4. 10-17). 63. **fire**—either figure of the slaughter (1 Samuel, 4. 10), or a literal burning by the heathen. **given to marriage**—*lit., praised—i.e., as brides*. 64. (Cf. 1 Samuel, 4. 17); and there were, doubtless others. **made no lamentation**—either because stupefied by grief, or hindered by the enemy. 65. (Cf. Psalm 22. 16; Isaiah, 42. 13). 66. **And he smote. . . part**—or, struck His enemies' back. The Philistines never regained their position after their defeats by David. 67. 68. **Tabernacle of Joseph**—or, home, or, tribe, to which—**tribe of Ephraim**—is parallel (cf. Revelation, 7. 8). Its pre-eminence was, like Saul's, only permitted. Judah had been the choice (Genesis, 49. 10). 69. Exalted as—**high palaces**—or, mountains, and abiding as—the earth. 70-72. God's sovereignty was illustrated in this choice. The contrast is striking—humility and exaltation—and the correspondence is beautiful **following. . . ewes, etc.**—*lit., ewes giving suck* (cf. Isaiah, 40. 11). On the pastoral terms cf. Psalm 79. 13.

## PSALM LXXIX.

**Ver. 1-13.** This Psalm, like the 74th, probably depicts the desolations of the Chaldeans (Jeremiah, 52. 12-24). It comprises the usual complaint, prayer, and promised thanks for relief.

1. (Cf. Psalm 74. 2-7). 2, 3 (Cf. Jeremiah, 15. 3; 16. 4.) 4. (Cf. Psalm 44. 13; Jeremiah, 42. 18; Lamentations, 2. 15). 5. **How long**—(Psalm 13. 1). **be angry**—(Psalm 74. 1-10). **jealousy burn**—(Deuteronomy, 29. 20). 6, 7 (Cf. Jeremiah, 10. 25). Though we deserve much, do not the heathen deserve more for their violence to us (Jeremiah, 51. 3-5; Zechariah, 1. 14)? The singular denotes the chief power, and the use of the plural indicates the combined confederates. **called upon** [or, by] **thy name**—proclaimed thy attributes and professed allegiance (Isaiah, 12. 4; Acts, 2. 21). 8. **former iniquities**—*lit., iniquities of former times* **prevent** [*lit., meet*] **us**—as Psalm 21. 3. 9. **for . . . glory of thy name** [and for] **name's sake**—both mean for illustrating thy attributes, faithfulness power, etc., **purge. . . sins**—*lit., make, or provide, atonement for us*. Deliverence from sin and suffering, for their good and God's glory, often distinguish the prayers of Old Testament saints (cf. Ephesians, 1. 7). 10. This ground of pleading often used (Exodus, 32. 12; Number, 14. 13-16). **blood. shed**—(*v.* 3). 11. **prisoner**—the whole captive people. **power**—*lit., arm* (Psalm 10. 15). 12. **into their bosom**—the lap or folds of the dress is used by Eastern people for receiving articles. The figure denotes retaliation (cf. Isaiah, 65. 6, 7). They reproached God as well as his people. 13. **sheep. . . pasture**—(cf. Psalm 74. 1; 78. 70).

## PSALM LXXX.

**Ver. 1-19.** *Shoshannim* — Lilies (Psalm 45., title). *Eduth* — Testimony, referring to the topic as a testimony of God to His people (cf. Psalm 19. 7). This Psalm probably relates to the captivity of the ten tribes as the former to that of Judah. Its complaint is aggravated by the contrast of former prosperity, and the prayer for relief occurs as a refrain through the Psalm.

**1, 2. Joseph** — for Ephraim (1 Chronicles, 7. 20-29; Psalm 78. 67; Revelation, 7. 8), for Israel. **shepherd** — (cf. Genesis, 49. 24). **leadest, etc.** — (Psalm 77. 50). **dwelling. . . cherubim** — (Exodus, 25. 20). The place of God's visible glory, whence He communed with the people (Hebrews, 9. 5). **shine forth** — appear (Psalm 50. 2; 94. 1). **before Ephraim, etc.** — These tribes marched next the ark (Numbers, 2 18-24). The name of Benjamin may be introduced merely in allusion to that fact, and not because that tribe was identified with Israel in the schism (1 Kings, 12. 16-21; cf. also Numbers, 10. 24). **3. turn us** — *i.e.*, from captivity. **thy face to shine** — (Numbers, 6. 25). **4. be angry** — (cf. *Margin*). **5. bread of tears** — still an Eastern figure for affliction. **6. strife** — object or cause of (Isaiah, 9. 11). On last clause cf. Psalm 79. 4; Ezekiel, 36. 4. **8-11. brought** — or, plucked up, as by roots, to be replanted. **a vine** — (Psalm 78. 47). The figure (Isaiah, 16. 8) represents the flourishing state of Israel, as predicted (Genesis, 28. 14), and verified (1 Kings, 4. 20-25). **12. hedges** — (Isaiah, 5. 5). **13. the boar** — may represent the ravaging Assyrian, and the *wild beast* other heathen. **14, 15. visit this vine** — favourably (Psalm 8. 4). **and the vineyard** — or, "And protect and guard what thy right hand," etc. **the branch** — *lit.*, "over the Son of Man," preceding this phrase, with "protect," or "watch." **for thyself** — a tacit allusion to the plea for help; for 16. **it** — (the vine), or **they** — (the people), are suffering from thy displeasure. **17. thy hand. . . upon** — *i.e.*, strength (Ezra, 7 6; 8. 22). **man of hand** — may allude to Benjamin (Genesis, 35 18). The terms in the latter clause correspond with those of *v.* 15, from "and the branch," etc., literally, and confirm the exposition given above. **18.** We need quickening grace (Psalm 71. 20; 119. 25) to persevere in thy right worship (Genesis, 4. 26; Romans, 10. 11). **19. cf. v 3, O God; v. 7. O God of hosts.**

## PSALM LXXXI.

**Ver. 1-16.** *Gittith* — (cf. Psalm 8., title). A festal Psalm, probably for the passover (cf. Matthew, 26. 30), in which, after an exhortation to praise God, He is introduced, reminding Israel of their obligations, chiding their neglect, and depicting the happy results of obedience.

**1. our strength** — (Psalm 38. 7). **2.** Unites the most joyful kinds of music, vocal and instrumental. **3. the new moon** — or, the month. **the time appointed** — (cf. Proverbs, 7. 20). **5. a testimony** — the feasts, especially the passover, attested God's relation to His people. **Joseph,** — for *Israel* (Psalm 80. 1). **went out through** — or, over, *i.e.*,



Israel in the exode. **I heard** — change of person. The writer speaks for the nation. **language** — *lit., lip* (Psalm 14. 1). An aggravation or element of their distress that their oppressors were foreigners (Deuteronomy, 28. 49). 6. God's language alludes to the burdensome slavery of the Israelites. 7. **secret place** — the cloud from which He troubled the Egyptians (Exodus, 14. 24). **proved thee** — (Psalm 7. 10; 17. 3); tested their faith by the miracle. 8. (cf. Psalm 50. 7). The reproof follows to *v.* 12. **if thou wilt hearken** — He then propounds the terms of His covenant: they should worship Him alone, who (*v.* 10) had delivered them, and would still confer all needed blessings. 11, 12. They failed, and He gave them up to their own desires and hardness of heart (Deuteronomy, 29. 18; Proverbs, 1. 30; Romans, 11. 25). 13-16. Obedience would have secured all promised blessings and the subjection of foes. In this passage, "should have," "would have," etc., are better "should" and "would," expressing God's intention at the time, *i.e.*, when they left Egypt.

## PSALM LXXXII.

**Ver. 1-8.** Before the Great Judge, the judges of the earth are rebuked, exhorted, and threatened.

**I. congregation** — (cf. Exodus, 12. 3; 16. 1). **of the mighty** — *i.e.*, of God, of His appointment. **the gods** — or, judges (Exodus, 21. 6; 22. 9), God's representatives. 2. **accept the persons** — *lit., take*, or, *lift up the faces, i.e.*, from dejection, or admit to favour and communion, regardless of merit (Leviticus, 19. 15; Proverbs, 18. 5). 3, 4. So must good judges act (Psalm 10. 14; 29. 12). **poor and needy** — (cf. Psalm 34. 10; 41. 1). 5. By the wilful ignorance and negligence of judges, anarchy ensues (Psalm 11. 3; 75. 3). **out of course** — (cf. *Margin*; Psalm 9. 6; 62. 2). 6, 7. Though God admitted their official dignity (John, 10. 34), He reminds them of their mortality. **fall like, etc.** — be cut off suddenly (Psalm 20. 8; 91. 7). 8. As rightful sovereign of earth, God is invoked personally, to correct the evils of His representatives.

## PSALM LXXXIII.

**Ver. 1-18.** *Of Asaph* — (cf. Psalm 74., title). The historical occasion is probably that of 2 Chronicles, 20. 1, 2 (cf. Psalm 47 and 48). After a general petition, the craft and rage of the combined enemies are described, God's former dealings recited, and a like summary and speedy destruction on them is invoked.

**I.** God addressed as indifferent (cf. Psalm 35: 22; 39. 12) **be not still** — *lit., not quiet*, as opposed to action. 2. **thine enemies** — as well as ours (Psalm 74. 23; Isaiah, 37. 23). 3. **hidden ones** — whom God specially protects (Psalm 27. 5; 91. 1). 4. **from being a nation** — utter destruction (Isaiah, 7. 8; 23. 1). **Israel** — used here for Judah, having been the common name. 5. **they have consulted** — *with heart*, or cordially. **together** — all alike. 6-8. **tabernacles** — for people (Psalm 78. 67). **they** — all these united with the children of Lot, or

Ammonites and Moabites (cf. 2 Chronicles, 20. 1). 9-11. Compare the similar fate of these (2 Chronicles, 20. 23) with that of the foes mentioned in Judges, 7. 22, here referred to. They destroyed one another (Judges, 4. 6-24; 7. 25). Human remains form manure (cf. 2 Kings, 9. 37; Jeremiah, 9. 22). 12. The language of the invaders. **house**—*lit.*, residences, inclosures, as for flocks (Psalm 65. 12). **of God**—as the proprietors of the land (2 Chronicles, 20. 11; Isaiah, 14. 25). 13. **like a wheel**—or, whirling of any light thing (Isaiah, 17. 13), as stubble or chaff. Psalm 1. 4). 14, 15. Pursue them, to an utter destruction. 16. **that they may seek**—or, as *v.* 18, supply "men," since *v.* 17, 18, amplify the sentiment of *v.* 16, expressing more fully the measure of destruction, and the lesson of God's being and perfections (cf. 2 Chronicles, 20. 29) taught to all men.

## PSALM LXXXIV.

**Ver. 1-12.** Cf. on titles of Psalms 8 and 42. The writer describes the desirableness of God's worship, and prays for a restoration to its privileges.

1. **amiable**—not lovely, but beloved. **tabernacles**—(Psalm 43. 3). 2. **longeth**—most intensely (Genesis, 31. 30; Psalm 17. 12). **fainteth**—exhausted with desire. **courts**—as tabernacles (*v.* 1)—the whole building. **crieth out**—*lit.*, sings for joy; but here, and Lamentations, 2. 19, expresses an act of sorrow as the corresponding noun (Psalm 17. 1; 61. 2). **heart and . . . flesh**—as Psalm 63. 1. **thine altars**—*i.e.*, of burnt-offering and incense, used for the whole tabernacle. Its structure afforded facilities for sparrows and swallows to indulge their known predilections for such places. Some understand the statement as to the birds as a comparison: "as they find homes so do I desire *thine altars*," etc. 4. This view is favoured by the language here, which, as Psalm 15. 1, 23. 6, recognises the blessing of membership in God's family, by terms denoting a *dwelling in His house*. 5. (cf. Psalm 68. 28). **in whose heart. . . ways**—*i.e.*, who knows and loves the way to God's favour (Proverbs, 16. 17; Isaiah, 40. 3, 4). 6. **valley of Baca**—or, weeping. Through such, by reason of their dry and barren condition, the worshippers often had to pass to Jerusalem. As they might become wells, or fountains, or pools, supplied by refreshing rain, so the grace of God, by the exercises of His worship, refreshes and revives the hearts of His people, so that for sorrows they have "rivers of delight" (Psalm 36. 8; 46. 4). 7. The figure of the pilgrim is carried out. As such daily refit their bodily strength till they reach Jerusalem, so the spiritual worshipper is daily supplied with spiritual strength by God's grace, till he appears before God in heaven. **appeareth. . . God**—the terms of the requisition for the attendance on the feasts (cf. Deuteronomy, 16. 16). 9. God is addressed as a shield (cf. *v.* 11). **thine anointed**—David (1 Samuel, 16. 12). 10. **I had . . . doorkeeper**—*lit.*, I choose to sit on the threshold, the meanest place. 11, 12. As a sun, God enlightens (Psalm 27. 1); as a shield, protects. *Grace* is God's favour, its fruit—*glory* the honour He bestows. **uprightly**—(Psalm 15. 2, 18. 23). **that trusteth**—constantly.

## PSALM LXXXV.

**Ver. 1-13.** On the ground of former mercies, the Psalmist prays for renewed blessings, and, confidently expecting them, rejoices.

**1. captivity** — not necessarily the Babylonian, but any great evil (Psalm 14. 7). 2, 3. (Cf. Psalm 32. 1-5). To turn from the *fierceness*, etc., implies that he was reconcilable, though 4-7, having still occasion for the anger which is deprecated. **draw out** — or, prolong (Psalm 36. 10). 8. He is confident God will favour His penitent people (Psalm 51. 17; 80. 18). **saints** — as Psalm 4. 3, the "godly." 9. They are here termed, "them that fear him;" and grace produces glory (Psalm 84. 11). 10. God's promises of *mercy* will be verified by his *truth* (cf. Psalm 25. 10; 40. 10; and the "work of righteousness" in His holy government shall be "peace" (Isaiah, 32. 17). There is an implied contrast with a dispensation, under which God's truth sustains His threatened wrath, and His righteousness inflicts misery on the wicked **II.** Earth and heavens shall abound with the blessings of this government; **12, 13,** and, under this the deserted land shall be productive, and may be *set*, or guided, in God's holy ways. Doubtless, in this description of God's returning favour, the writer had in view that more glorious period, when Christ shall establish His government on God's reconciled justice and abounding mercy.

## PSALM LXXXVI.

**Ver. 1-17.** This is a prayer in which the writer, with deep emotion, mingles petitions and praises, now urgent for help, and now elated with hope, in view of former mercies. The occurrence of many terms and phrases peculiar to David's Psalms clearly intimate its authority.

**1, 2. poor and needy** — a suffering child of God, as Psalm 10. 12, 17; 18. 27. **I am holy** — or, godly, as Psalm 4. 3; 85. 8. **4. lift up my soul** — with strong desire (Psalm 25. 1). 5-7. **unto all... that call upon thee** — or, worship thee (Psalm 50. 15; 90. 15) however undeserving (Exodus, 34. 6; Leviticus, 11. 9-13) 8. **neither... works** — *lit., nothing like thy works*, the *gods* have none at all. 9, 10. The pious Jews believed that God's common relation to all would be ultimately acknowledged by all men (Psalm 45. 12-16; 47. 9). **11 teach** — Show, point out. **thy way** — of providence. **walk in thy truth** — according to its declarations. **unite my heart** — fix all my affections (Psalm 12. 2; James, 4. 8). **to fear thy name** — (cf. *v.* 12), to honour thy perfections. 13, 14. The reason: God had delivered him from death and the power of insolent, violent, and godless persecutors (Psalm 54. 3; Ezekiel, 8. 12). 15. Contrasts God with his enemies (cf. *v.* 5). 16. **son... handmaid** — home-born servant (cf. Luke, 15. 17). 17. **show me** — *lit., Make with me a token*, by thy providential care. Thus in and by his prosperity his enemies would be confounded.

## PSALM LXXXVII.

**Ver. 1-7.** This triumphal song was probably occasioned by the same event as the 46th. The writer celebrates the glory of the Church, as the means of spiritual blessing to the nations.

1. His [*i.e.*, God's] **foundation** — or, what He has founded, *i.e.*, Zion (Isaiah, 14. 32). **is in the holy mountains** — the location of Zion, in the wide sense, for the capital, or Jerusalem, being on several hills. 2. **gates** — for the enclosures, or city to which they opened (Psalm 9. 14; 122. 2; cf. Psalm 132. 13, 14). 3. **spoken of** [or, *in*] **thee** — *i.e.*, the city of God (Psalm 46. 4; 48. 2). This is what is spoken by God. **to them. . . me** — *lit.*, for my knowers, they are true worshippers (Psalm 36. 10; Isaiah, 19. 21) They are mentioned as specimens. **this** [*i.e.*, nation] **was born there.** Of each it is said, "*This was born*, or is a native of Zion, spiritually." 5. The writer resumes — **this and that man** — *lit.*, Man and man, or many (Genesis, 14. 10; Exodus, 8. 10, 14), or all (Isaiah, 44. 5; Galatians, 3. 28). **the highest. . . her** — God is her protector. 6. The same idea is set forth under the figure of a register made by God (cf. Isaiah, 4. 3). 7. As in a great procession of those thus *written up*, or registered, seeking Zion (Isaiah, 2. 3; Jeremiah, 50. 5), the *singers* and *players*, or pipers, shall precede. **all my springs** — so each shall say. "All my sources of spiritual joy are in thee" (Psalm 46. 4; 84. 6)

## PSALM LXXXVIII.

**Ver. 1-18.** *Upon Mahalath* — either an instrument, as a lute, to be used as an accompaniment, *Leannoth*, for singing, or, as others think, an enigmatic title (cf. Psalm 5., 22., and 45 titles) denoting the subject — *i.e.*, "sickness or disease, for humbling," the idea of spiritual maladies being often represented by disease (cf. Psalm 6. 5, 6; 22. 14, 15, etc.). On the other terms cf. Psalms 42. 32. Heman and Ethan (Psalm 89. title) were David's singers (1 Chronicles, 6. 18, 33; 15. 17), of the family of Kohath. If the persons alluded to (1 Kings, 4. 31; 1 Chronicles, 2. 6), they were probably adopted into the tribe of Judah. Though called a song, which usually implies joy (Psalm 85. 1), both the style and matter of the Psalm are very despondent; yet the appeals to God evince faith, and we may suppose that the word *song* might be extended to such composition.

1, 2. Cf. on the terms used Psalm 22. 2; 31. 2. **grave** — *lit.*, hell (Psalm 16. 10), death in wide sense. 4. **go. . . pit** — of destruction (Psalm 28. 1), **as a man** — *lit.*, a stout man, whose strength is utterly gone. 5. **free. . . dead** — Cut off from God's care, as are the slain, who, falling under His wrath, are left, no longer sustained by His hand. 6. Similar figures for distress in Psalm 63. 9; 69. 3. 7. Cf. Psalm 2. 2, on first, and Psalm 42. 7, on last clause. Both cut off from sympathy and made hateful to friends (Psalm 31. 11). **mine eye mourneth** — *lit.*, decays, or, fails, denoting exhaustion (Psalm 6. 7; 31. 9). 1. . . **called** — (Psalm 86. 5, 7). **stretched out** — for help (Psalm 44. 20). 10. **shall the dead** [the remains of ghosts] **arise** — *lit.*, rise up, *i.e.*, as dead persons. 11, 12. Amplify the foregoing, the whole purport (as Psalm 6. 5) being to contrast death and life as seasons for praising God. **prevent** — meet — *i.e.*, he will diligently come before God for help (Psalm 18. 41). 14. On the terrors (Psalm 27. 9; 74. 1; 77. 7). 15. **from. . . youth up** — all my life. With 16, 17 the extremes of anguish

and despair are depicted. 18 **into darkness** — better omit "*into*" — mine acquaintances (are) darkness, the gloom of death, etc., (Job. 17. 13, 14).

## PSALM LXXXIX.

**Ver. 1-52.** *Of Ethan* — (see Psalm 88 title). The Psalm was composed during some season of great national distress, perhaps Absalom's rebellion. It contrasts the promised prosperity and perpetuity of David's throne (with reference to the great promise of 2 Samuel, 7.), with a time when God appeared to have forgotten His covenant. The picture thus drawn may typify the promises and the adversities of Christ's kingdom, and the terms of confiding appeal to God provide appropriate prayers for the divine aid and promised blessings.

**1. mercies** — those promised (Isaiah, 55. 3; Acts, 13. 34), and — **faithfulness** — *i.e.*, in fulfilling them. **2. I have said** — expressed, as well as felt, my convictions (2 Corinthians, 4. 13). **3, 4.** The object of this faith expressed in God's words (2 Samuel, 7. 11-16). **with** [or *lit.*, *to*] **my chosen** — as the covenant is in the form of a promise. **6, 7** This is worthy of our belief, for His faithfulness (is praised) by the congregation of saints or holy ones, *i.e.*, angels (cf. Deuteronomy, 33. 2; Daniel, 8. 13). **sons of . . . mighty** (cf. Psalm 29. 1). So is He to be admired on earth. **8-14.** To illustrate His power and faithfulness examples are cited from history. His control of the sea (the most mighty and unstable object in nature), and of Egypt (Psalm 87. 4), the first great foe of Israel (subjected to utter helplessness from pride and insolence), are specimens. At the same time, the whole frame of nature founded and sustained by Him, Tabor and Hermon for east and west, and "north and south," together representing the whole world, declares the same truth as to His attributes. **rejoice in thy name** — praise thy perfections by their very existence. **15.** His government of righteousness is served by *mercy* and *truth* as ministers (Psalm 85. 10-13). **know the joyful sound** — understand and appreciate the spiritual blessings symbolised by the feasts to which the people were called by the *trumpet* (Leviticus, 25. 9, etc.). **walk countenance** — live in His favour (Psalm 4. 6; 44. 3). **16, 17. in** [or *by*] **thy righteousness** — thy faithful just rule. **glory** [or. *beauty*] **of their strength** — they shall be adorned as well as protected. **our horn** — exalt our power (Psalm 75. 10; Luke, 1. 69). **18.** (Cf. *Margin*) Thus is introduced the promise to "our shield," "our king." David. **19-37. then** — When the covenant was established, of whose execution the exalted views of God now given furnish assurance. **thou to thy Holy One** — or godly saints, object of favour (Psalm 4. 3). *Nathan* is meant (2 Samuel, 7. 17; 1 Chronicles, 17. 3-15). **laid help** — *lit.*, *given help*. David was chosen and then exalted. **20. I have found** — having sought and then selected him (1 Samuel, 16. 1-16), **21.** will protect and sustain (Isaiah, 41. 10), **22-25** by restraining and conquering his enemies, and performing my gracious purpose of extending his dominion — **hand** [and] **right hand** — power (Psalm 17. 7; 66. 5). **sea, and . . . rivers** — limits of his empire (Psalm 72. 8). **26, 27. first born** — one who is chief, most beloved or distinguished (Exodus, 4. 22; Colossians, 1. 15). In God's sight and purposes

he was the first among all monarchs, and specially so in his typical relation to Christ. 28-37. This relation is perpetual with David's descendants, as a whole typical in official position of his last greatest descendant. Hence, though in personal relations any of them might be faithless and so punished, their typical relation shall continue. His oath confirms his promise, and the most enduring objects of earth and heaven illustrate its perpetual force (Psalm 72. 5, 7, 17). **by my holiness**—as a holy God. **once**—one thing (Psalm 27. 4.) **that I will not lie**—*lit., if I lie*—part of the form of swearing (1 Samuel, 24. 6; 2 Samuel, 3. 35). **it shall . . . moon . . . heaven**—*lit., "As the moon, and the witness in the sky is sure, i.e., the moon."* 38-52. present a striking contrast to these glowing promises, in mournful evidences of a loss of God's favour. 38. **cast off**—and *rejected* (cf. Psalm 15. 4; 42. 2; 44. 9). 39. An insult to the *crown*, as of divine origin, was a profanation. 40-45. The ruin is depicted under several figures—a *vineyard* whose broken hedges, and a *stronghold* whose ruins invite spoilers and invaders; a warrior, whose enemies are aided by God, and whose sword's *edge*—*lit., rock or strength* (Joshua, 5. 2) is useless; and a youth prematurely old. **days of his youth**—or, youthful vigor, *i.e., of the royal line, or promised perpetual kingdom, under the figure of a man.* 46. **how long? etc.**—(Cf. Psalm 13. 1; 88. 14; Jeremiah, 4. 4). 47. These expostulations are excited in view of the identity of the prosperity of this kingdom with the welfare of *all mankind* (Genesis, 22. 18; Psalm 72. 17; Isaiah, 9. 7; II. 1-10); for if such is the fate of this chosen royal line, 48. **what man**—*lit., strong man—shall live?* and, indeed, have not all men been made in vaine, as to glorifying God? 49-51. The terms of expostulation are used in view of the actual appearance that God had forsaken his people and forgotten His promise, and the plea for aid is urged in view of the reproaches of His and His people's enemies (cf. Isaiah, 37. 17-35). **bear in my bosom**—as feeling the affliction of the people (Psalm 69. 9). **footsteps**—ways (Psalm 56. 6). **blessed, etc.**—denotes returning confidence (Psalm 34. 1-3. **Amen. and Amen**—closes the third book of Psalms.

## PSALM XC.

**Ver. 1-17.** Contrasting man's frailty with God's eternity, the writer mourns over it as the punishment of sin, and prays for a return of the divine favour. *A Prayer [mainly such] of Moses the man of God*—(Deuteronomy, 33. 1; Joshua, 14. 6), as such he wrote this (cf. titles of Psalm 18., and Psalm 36.).

1. **dwelling place**—home (cf. Ezekiel, 11. 16), as a refuge (Deuteronomy, 33. 27). 2. **brought forth [and] formed**—both express the idea of production by birth. 3. **to destruction**—*lit., even to dust* (Genesis, 3. 19), which is partly quoted in the last clause. 4. Even were our days now 1000 years, as Adam's, our life would be but a moment in God's sight (2 Peter, 3. 8). **a watch**—or, third part of a night (cf. Exodus, 14. 24). 5, 6. Life is like grass, which, though changing under the influence of the night's dew, and flourishing in the morning, is soon cut down and withereth (Psalm 103, 15; 1 Peter, 1.

24). 7, 8. **for** — A reason, this is the infliction of God's wrath. **troubled** — *lit., confounded by terror* (Psalm 2. 5). Death is by sin (Romans, 5. 12). Though *secret* the light of God's countenance, as a candle, will bring sin to view (Proverbs, 20. 27; 1 Corinthians, 4. 5). 9. **are passed** — *lit., turn, as to depart* (Jeremiah, 6. 4). **spend** — *lit., consume. as a tale* — *lit., a thought or, a sigh* (Ezekiel, 2. 10). 10. Moses' life was an exception (Deuteronomy, 34. 7). **it is..cut off** — or, driven, as is said of the quails in using the same word (Numbers, 11. 31). In view of this certain and speedy end, life is full of sorrow. 11. The whole verse may be read as a question implying the negative, "No one knows what thy anger can do, and what thy wrath is, estimated, by a true piety." 12. Thus he prays we may know or understand, so as properly to number or appreciate the shortness of our days, that we may be wise. 13. (Cf. Psalm 13. 2). **let it repent** — a strong figure, as Exodus, 32. 12, imploring a change in His dealings. 14. **early** — promptly. 15. As have been our sorrows, so let our joys be great and long. 16. **thy work** — or, providential acts. **thy glory** — (Psalm 8. 5; 45. 3), the honour accruing from thy work of mercy to us. 17. **let the beauty** — or, sum of His gracious acts, in their harmony, be illustrated in us, and favour our enterprises.

## PSALM XCI.

**Ver. 1-16.** David is the most probable author; and the pestilence, mentioned 2 Samuel, 24., the most probable of any special occasion, to which the Psalm may refer. The changes of persons allowable in poetry are here frequently made.

1. *To dwell in the secret place* (Psalm 27. 5; 31. 20), denotes nearness to God. Such as do so abide or lodge secure from assaults, and can well use the terms of trust in *v. 2*. 3. **snares...** [and] **noisome pestilence** — *lit., plagues of mischief* (Psalm 5. 9; 52. 7), are expressive figures for various evils. 4. For the first figure cf. Deuteronomy, 32. 11; Mark, 23. 37. **buckler** — *lit., surrounding* — *i.e., a kind of shield, covering all over*. 5. **terror** — or, what causes it (Proverbs, 20. 2). **by night** — then aggravated. **arrow** — *i.e., of enemies*. 7, 8. The security is more valuable, as being special, and therefore, evidently of God; and while ten thousands of the wicked fall, the righteous are in such safety, that they only see the calamity. 9-12. This exemption from evil is the result of trust in God, who employs angels as ministering spirits (Hebrews, 1. 14). 13. Even the fiercest, strongest, and most insidious animals may be trampled on with impunity. 14-16. God Himself speaks (cf. Psalm 46. 10; 75. 2, 3). All the terms to express safety and peace indicate the most undoubting confidence (cf. Psalm 18. 2; 20. 1; 22. 5). **set his love** — that of the most ardent kind. **show him** — *lit., make him see* (Psalm 50. 23; Luke, 2. 30).

## PSALM XCII.

**Ver. 1-15.** *A Psalm song* — (cf. Psalm 30. title). The theme is, that God should be praised for His righteous judgments on the wicked and

His care and defence of His people. Such a topic, at all times proper, is specially so for the reflections of the Sabbath-day.

**1. sing... name**—celebrate thy perfections. **2. in the morning... every night**—diligently and constantly (Psalm 42. 8). **loving-kindness**—*lit.*, *mercy*. **faithfulness**—in fulfilling promises (Psalm 89. 14). **3.** In such a work all proper aid must be used. **with a... sound**—or, *on Higgsaion* (cf. Psalm 9. 16), perhaps an instrument of that name, from its sound resembling the muttered sound of meditation, as expressed also by the word. This is joined with the harp. **4. thy work**—*i.e.*, of providence (Psalm 90. 16, 17). **5. great... words**—correspond to *deep* or *vast thoughts* (Psalm 40. 5; Romans, II. 23). **6. A brutish man knoweth not**—*i.e.*, God's works, so the Psalmist describes himself (Psalm 73. 22) when amazed by the prosperity of the wicked, now understood and explained. **8.** This he does in part, by contrasting their ruin with God's exaltation and eternity. **most high**—as occupying the highest place in heaven (Psalm 7. 7; 18. 16). **9, 10.** A farther contrast with the wicked, in the lot of the righteous, safety and triumph. **horn... exalt**—is to increase power (Psalm 75. 5). **annointed... fresh [or, new] oil**—(Psalm 23. 5) a figure for refreshment (cf. Luke, 7. 46). Such use of oil is still common in the East. **11. see... [and] hear my desire**—or *lit.*, *look* on my enemies and hear of the wicked (cf. Psalm 27. 11; 54. 7)—*i.e.*, I shall be gratified by their fall. **12-14.** The vigorous growth, longevity, utility, fragrance, and beauty of these noble trees, set forth the life, character, and destiny of the pious; **15,** and they thus declare God's glory as their strong and righteous ruler.

## PSALM XCIII.

**Ver. 1-5.** This and the six following Psalms were applied by the Jews to the times of the Messiah. The theme is God's supremacy in creation and providence.

**1.** God is described as a king entering on His reign, and, for robes of royalty, investing Himself with the glorious attributes of His nature. The result of His thus reigning is the durability of the world. **2-4.** His underived power exceeds the most sublime exhibitions of the most powerful objects in nature (Psalm 89. 9). **5.** While His power inspires dread, His revealed will should inspire our confidence (cf. Psalm 19. 7; 25. 10), and thus fear and love combined, producing all holy emotions, should distinguish the worship we offer in His house, both earthly and heavenly.

## PSALM XCIV.

**Ver. 1-23.** The writer, appealing to God in view of the oppression of enemies, rebukes them for their wickedness and folly, and encourages himself, in the confidence that God will punish evil-doers, and favour His people.

**1, 2.** God's revenge is His judicial infliction of righteous punishment. **show thyself**—(cf. *Margin*). **Lift up thyself**—or, Arise, both fig-



ures representing God as heretofore indifferent (cf. Psalm 3. 7; 22. 16, 20). 3, 4. In an earnest expostulation he expresses his desire that the insolent triumph of the wicked may be ended. 5, 6. **people** [and] **heritage** — are synonymous, the people being often called God's heritage. As justice to the weak is a sign of the best government, their oppression is a sign of the worst (Deuteronomy, 10. 18; Isaiah, 10. 2). 7. Their cruelty is only exceeded by their wicked and absurd presumption (Psalm 10, 11; 59. 7). 8. **ye brutish** — (cf. Psalm 73. 22; 92. 6.) 9-11. The evidence of God's providential government is found in His creative power and omniscience, which also assure us that He can punish the wicked in regard to all their vain purposes. 12, 13. On the other hand, He favours, though He chastens, the pious, and will teach and preserve them till the prosperous wicked are overthrown. 14, 15. This results from His abiding love (Deuteronomy, 32. 15), which is farther evinced by His restoring order in His government, whose right administration will be approved by the good. 16. These questions imply that none other than God will help (Psalm 60. 9), 17-19, a fact fully confirmed by his past experience. **dwelt in silence** — as in the grave (Psalm 31. 17). **my thoughts** — or, anxious cares. 20. **throno** — power, rulers. **iniquity** [and] **mischief** — both denote evils done to others, as 21, explains. 22, 23. Yet he is safe in God's care. **defence** — (Psalm 59. 9) **rock...of refuge** — (Psalm 9. 9; 18. 2). **bring...iniquity** — (cf. Psalm 5. 10; 7. 16). **in their...wickedness** — while they are engaged in evil doing.

## PSALM XCV.

**Ver. 1-11.** David (Hebrews, 4. 7) exhorts men to praise God for His greatness, and warns them, in God's words, against neglecting His service.

1. The terms used to express the highest kind of joy. **Rock** — A firm basis, giving certainty of salvation (Psalm 62. 7). 2. **come...presence** — *lit., approach* or, meet Him (Psalm 17. 13). 3. **above...gods** — esteemed such by men, though really nothing (Jeremiah, 5. 7; 10. 10-15). 4, 5. The terms used describe the world in its whole extent, subject to God. 6. **come** — *enter*, with solemn forms, as well as hearts. 7. This relation illustrates our entire dependence (cf. Psalm 23. 3; 74. 1). The last clause is united by Paul (Hebrews, 3. 7) to the following (cf. Psalm 81. 8), 8-11, warning against neglect; and this is sustained by citing the melancholy fate of their rebellious ancestors, whose provoking insolence is described by quoting the language of God's complaint (Numbers, 14. 11) of their conduct at *Meribah* and *Massah* names given (Exodus, 17. 7) to commemorate their strife and contention with Him (Psalm 78. 18, 41). **err in their heart** — their wanderings in the desert were but types of their innate ignorance and perverseness. **that they should not** — *lit., if they*, etc., part of the form of swearing (cf. Numbers, 14. 30; Psalm 89. 35;)

## PSALM XCVI.

**Ver. 1-13.** The substance of this Psalm, and portions of the 97th, 98th and 100th, are found in 1 Chronicles, 16., which was used by David's directions in the dedication of the tabernacle on Mount Zion. The dis-

pensation of the Messiah was typified by that event, involving, as it did, a more permanent seat of worship, and the introduction of additional and more spiritual services. Hence the language of these Psalms may be regarded as having a higher import than that pertinent to the occasion on which it was thus publicly used.

1-3. All nations are invited to unite in this most joyful praise. **new song** — *lit., fresh*, for new mercies (Psalm 33. 3; 40. 3). **show forth** — *lit., declare joyful tidings*. *The salvation* illustrates His glory in its wonders of love and mercy. 4, 5. For He is not a local God, but of universal agency, while idols are nothing. 6. **honour and majesty** — are His attendants, declared in His mighty works, while power and grace are specially seen in His spiritual relations to His people. 7-9. **give** — or, Ascribe (Psalm 29. 1) due honour to Him, by acts of appointed and solemn worship in His house. **offering** — of thanks. **beauty of holiness** — (Psalm 29. 2). **fear...him** — (Psalm 2. 11). 10. Let all know that the government of the world is ordered in justice, and they shall enjoy firm and lasting peace (cf. Psalm 72. 3, 7; Isaiah, 9. 6, 7). 11-13. For which reason the universe is invoked to unite in joy, and even inanimate nature (Romans, 8. 14-22) is poetically represented as capable of joining in the anthem of praise.

## PSALM XCVII.

**Ver. 1-12.** The writer celebrates the Lord's dominion over nations and nature, describes its effect on foes and friends, and exhorts and encourages the latter.

1, 2. This dominion is a cause of joy, because, however our minds are oppressed with terror before the throne of the King of kings (Exodus, 19. 16; Deuteronomy, 5. 22), we know it is based on righteous principles and judgments which are according to truth. 3-5. The attending illustrations of God's awful justice on enemies (Psalm 83. 14) are seen in the disclosures of His almighty power on the elements of nature (cf. Psalm 46. 2; 77. 17; Habakkuk, 3. 6, etc.). 6. **heavens** — or, their inhabitants (Psalm 50. 6), as opposed to the *nations* in the latter clause (cf. Isaiah, 40. 5; 66. 18). 7. Idolaters are utterly put to shame, for if angels must worship Him, how much more those who worshipped them. **all ye gods** — *lit., all ye angels* (Psalm 8. 5; 138. 1; Hebrews, 1. 6; 2. 7). Paul quotes, not as a prophecy, but as language used in regard to the Lord Jehovah, who, in the Old Testament, *theophania* is the second person of the Godhead. 8, 9. The exaltation of Zion's king is joy to the righteous and sorrow to the wicked. **daughters of Judah** — (cf. Psalm 48. 11). **above all gods** — (Psalm 95. 3). 10-13. Let gratitude for the blessings of providence and grace incite saints (Psalm 4. 3) to holy living. Spiritual blessings are in store, represented by light (Psalm 27. 1) and gladness. **sown** — to spring forth abundantly for such, who alone can and well may rejoice in the holy government of their sovereign Lord (cf. Psalm 30. 4; 32. 11).

## PSALM XCVIII.

**Ver. 1-9.** In view of the wonders of grace and righteousness displayed in God's salvation, the whole creation is invited to unite in praise.

**1. gotten . . . victory** — *lit., made salvation*, enabled Him to save His people. **right hand, and . . . arm** — denote power. **holy arm** — or, arm of holiness, the power of His united moral perfections (Psalm 22. 3; 32. 11). **2.** The *salvation* is the result of His *righteousness* (Psalm 7. 17; 31. 1), and both are publicly displayed. **3.** The union of *mercy* and *truth* (Psalm 57. 3; 85. 10) secure the blessing of the promise (Genesis, 12. 3; 18. 18) to all the world (Isaiah, 52. 10). **4-6. make a loud noise** — or, burst forth (Isaiah, 14. 7; 44. 23). **before . . . king** — hail Him as your sovereign; and while with every aid to demonstrate zeal and joy, intelligent creatures are invited to praise, as in Psalm 96. 11-13, inanimate nature is also summoned to honour Him who triumphs and rules in righteousness and equity.

## PSALM XCIX.

**Ver. 1-9.** God's government is specially exercised in and for His Church, which should praise Him for His gracious dealings.

**1. sitteth . . . cherubim** — (cf. 1 Samuel, 4. 4; Psalm 80. 1). **tremble . . . be moved** — inspired with fear by His judgments on the wicked. **2. great in Zion** — where He dwells (Psalm 9. 11). **3. thy . . . name** — perfections of justice, power, etc. **great and terrible** — producing dread (Deuteronomy, 10. 17), and to be praised by those over whom he is exalted (Psalm 97. 9). **it is holy** — or, He is holy (*v.* 5. 9; Isaiah, 6. 3). **4, 5.** To His wise and righteous government all nations should render honour. **king's . . . judgment** — His power is combined with justice. **he is holy** — (cf. Psalm 22. 3). **6-8.** The experience of these servants of God is cited for encouragement. **among . . . priests, among . . . upon the Lord, [and] He spake . . . pillar** — may be referred to all three (cf. Exodus, 18. 19; Leviticus, 8. 15; Deuteronomy, 5. 5; 1 Samuel, 9. 13). The *cloudy pillar* was the medium of divine intercourse (Exodus, 33. 9; Numbers, 12. 5). Obedience was united with worship. God answered them as intercessors for the people, who, though forgiven, were yet chastened (Exodus, 32. 10, 34).

## PSALM C.

**Ver. 1-5.** As closing this series, (cf. on Psalm 94), this Psalm is a general call on all the earth to render exalted praise to God, the creator, and benefactor of men.

**1-2.** With thankful praise, unite service as the subjects of a king (Psalm 2. 11, 12). **3.** To the obligations of a creature and subject is added that of a beneficiary (Psalm 95. 7). **4.** Join joyfully in His public worship. The terms are, of course, figurative (cf. Psalm 84. 2; 92. 13; Isaiah, 66. 23). **enter** — or, Come with solemnity (Psalm 95. 6). **5. The reason: God's eternal mercy and truth** (Psalm 25. 8; 89. 7).

## PSALM CI.

**Ver. 1-8.** In this Psalm the profession of the principles of his domestic and political government testifies, as well as actions in accordance with it, David's appreciation of God's mercy to him, and His judgment on his enemies: and thus he sings or celebrates God's dealings.

2. He avows his sincere purpose, by God's aid, to act uprightly (Genesis, 17. 1; Psalm 18. 30). 3. **set . . . eyes** — as an example to be approved and followed. **no wicked thing** — *lit.*, word, plan or purpose of Belial (Psalm 41. 8). **work of . . . aside** — apostates. **not cleave to me** — I will not be implicated in it (Psalm 1. 1-3). 4. **a froward** [or, *perverse*] **heart** — (Psalm 18. 26). Such a temper I will not indulge, nor even know evil or wickedness. 5, 6. The slanderous and *haughty persons*, so mischievous in society, I will disown: but — **mine eyes . . . upon** — or, I will select reliable and honest men for my servants. 7. **not dwell** — *lit.*, *not sit*, or tarry, or be established. 8. **will early** — or, diligently. **city of the Lord** — or, holy place (Psalm 48. 2), where wicked men shall not be tolerated.

## PSALM CII.

**Ver. 1-28.** *A prayer of the afflicted*, etc. — The general terms seem to denote the propriety of regarding the Psalm as suitably expressive of the anxieties of any one of David's descendants, piously concerned for the welfare of the Church. It was probably David's composition, and, though specially suggested by some peculiar trials, descriptive of future times. *Overwhelmed* — (cf. Psalm 61. 2). *Complaint* — (Psalm 55. 2). *Pouring out the soul* — (Psalm 62. 8). The tone of complaint predominates, though in view of God's promises and abiding faithfulness, it is sometimes exchanged for that of a confidence and hope.

1-3. The terms used occur in Psalm 4. 1; 17. 1, 6; 18. 6; 31. 2, 10; 37. 20. 4. (Cf. Psalm 121. 6). **so that I forget** — or, have forgotten, *i.e.*, in my distress (Psalm 107. 18), and hence strength fails. 5. **voice . . . groaning** — effect put for cause, my agony emaciates me. 6, 7. The figures express extreme loneliness. 8. **sworn against me** — or, *lit.*, *by me*, wishing others as miserable as I am (Numbers, 5. 21). 9. **ashes** — a figure of grief, my bread; weeping or tears, my drink (Psalm 80. 5). 10. **lifted . . . cast me down** — or, cast me away as stubble by a whirlwind (Isaiah, 64. 6). 11. **shadow . . . declineth** — soon to vanish in the darkness of night. 12. Contrast with man's frailty (cf. Psalm 90. 1-7). **thy remembrance** — that by which thou art remembered, thy promise. 13, 14. Hence it is here adduced. **for** [or, *when*] . . . **the set time, etc.** — the time promised, the indication of which is the interest felt for Zion by the people of God. 15-17. God's favour to the Church will affect her persecutors with fear. **when the Lord shall build** — or, better, *Because* the Lord hath built, etc., as a reason for the effect on others; for in thus acting and hearing the humble, He is most glorious. 18. **people . . . created** — (cf. Psalm 22. 31), an organised body, as a

Church. 19-22. A summary of what shall be written. **for** — or, That, as introducing the statement of God's condescension. **to loose . . . appointed** — or, deliver them (Psalm 79. 11). **to declare, etc.** — or, That God's name may be celebrated in the assemblies of His Church, gathered from all nations (Zechariah, 8. 20-23), and devoted to His service. 23-28. The writer, speaking for the Church, finds encouragement in the midst of all his distresses. God's eternal existence is a pledge of faithfulness to His promises. **in the way** — of providence. **weakened** — *lit., afflicted*, and made fearful of a premature end, a figure of the apprehension of the Church, lest God might not perform His promise, drawn from those of a person in view of the dangers of early death (cf. Psalm 89. 47). Paul (Hebrews, 1. 10) quotes *v.* 26-28 as addressed to Christ in His divine nature. The scope of the Psalm, as already seen, so far from opposing, favours this view, especially by the sentiments of *v.* 12-15 (Isaiah, 60. 1). The association of the Messiah with a day of future glory to the Church was very intimate in the minds of Old Testament writers, and with correct views of His nature it is very consistent that He should be addressed as the Lord and Head of His Church, who would bring about that glorious future on which they ever dwelt with fond and delightful anticipations.

## PSALM CIII.

**Ver.-22.** A Psalm of joyous praise, in which the writer rises from a thankful acknowledgement of personal blessings to a lively celebration of God's gracious attributes, as not only intrinsically worthy of praise, but as specially suited to man's frailty, and concludes by invoking all creatures to unite in his song.

1. **bless, etc.** — when God is the object, praise. **my soul** — myself (Psalm 3. 3; 25. 1), with allusion to the act, as one of intelligence, **all . . . within me** — (Deuteronomy, 6. 5). **his holy name** — (Psalm 5. 11), His complete moral perfections. 2. **forget not all** — not any, none of His benefits. 3. Diseases, as penal inflictions (Deuteronomy, 39. 2; 2 Chronicles, 21. 19). **redeemeth** — cost is implied. **destruction** — *lit., pit of corruption* (Psalm 16. 10). **crowneeth** — or, adorneth (Psalm 65. 14). **tender mercies** — compassions (cf. Psalm 25. 6; 40. 11). 5. By God's provision, the saint retains a youthful vigor like the eagles (Psalm 92. 14; cf. Isaiah, 40. 31). 6. *Lit., righteousnesses and judgments*, denoting various acts of God's government. 7. **ways** — of providence, etc., as usual (Psalm 25. 4; 67. 2). **acts** — *lit., wonders* (Psalm 9. 11; 78. 17), 8-10. God's benevolence implies no merit. He shows it to sinners, who also are chastened for a time (Exodus, 34. 6). **keep (anger)** — in Leviticus, 19. 18, bear a grudge (Jeremiah, 3. 5. 12). 11. **great** — efficient. 12. **removed . . . from us** — so as to no longer affect our relations to Him, 13. **pltieth** — *lit., has compassion on*. 14. **he [who formed, Psalm 94. 9], knoweth our frame** — *lit., our form*. **we are dust** — made of and tending to it (Genesis, 2. 7). 15, 16. *So short and frail* is life that a breath may destroy it. **it is gone** — *lit., it is not*. **know it no more** — no more recognise him (Psalm 90. 6; Isaiah, 40. 6-8). 17, 18. For similar contrast cf. Psalm 90. 2-6; 102. 27, 28

**such . . . covenant** — limits the general terms preceding righteousness — as usual (Psalm 7. 17; 31. 1). God's firm and universal dominion is a pledge that He will keep His promise (Psalm 11. 4; 47. 8). 20-22. **do his commandments . . . word** — or *lit., so as to hearken*, etc., *i.e.*, their acts of obedience are prompt, so that they are ever ready to hear, and know, and follow implicitly His declared will (cf. Deuteronomy, 26. 17; Luke, 1. 19). **ye his hosts** — myraids, or armies, as corresponding to *angels of great power*; denoting multitude also. **all his works** — creatures of every sort, every where.

## PSALM CIV.

**Ver. 1-35.** The Psalmist celebrates God's glory in His works of creation and providence, teaching the dependence of all living creatures; and contrasts the happiness of those who praise Him with the awful end of the wicked.

1. God's essential glory, and also that displayed by His mighty works, afford ground for praise. 2. **light** — is a figurative representation of the glory of the invisible God (Matthew 17. 2; 1 Timothy, 6. 16). Its use in this connection may refer to the first work of creation (Genesis, 1. 3), **stretches out the heavens** — the visible heavens or sky which cover the earth as a curtain (Isaiah, 40. 12), 3. **in the waters** — or, it may be *with*; using this fluid for the *beams*, or frames, of His residence accords with the figure of clouds for chariots, and wind as means of conveyance. **walketh** — or, moveth (cf. Psalm 18. 10, 11; Amos, 9. 6). 4. This is quoted by Paul (Hebrews, 1. 7) to denote the subordinate position of angels, *i.e.*, they are only messengers as other and material agencies. **spirits** — *lit., winds, flaming fire* — (Psalm 105. 32), being here so called. 5. The earth is firmly fixed by His power. 6-9. These verses rather describe the wonders of the flood than the creation (Genesis, 7. 19, 20; 2 Peter, 3. 5, 6). God's method of arresting the flood and making its waters subside is poetically called a *rebuke* (Psalm 76. 6; Isaiah, 50. 2), and the process of their subsiding by undulations among the hills and valleys is vividly described. 10-13. Once destructive these waters are subjected to the service of God's creatures. In rain and dew from His chambers (cf. *v.* 3), and fountains and streams, they give drink to thirsting animals, and fertilise the soil. Trees thus nourished supply homes to singing birds, and the earth teems with the productions of God's wise agencies, 14, 15, so that men and beasts are abundantly provided with food. **for the service** — *lit., for the culture*, etc., by which he secures the results. **oil . . . shine** — *lit., makes his face to shine more than oil, i.e.*, so cheers and invigorates him, that outwardly he appears better than if anointed. — **strengtheneth . . . heart** — gives vigor to man (cf. Judges, 19. 5). 16-19. God's care of even wild animals and uncultivated parts of the earth. 20-23. He provides and adapts to man's wants the appointed times and seasons. 24-26. From a view of the earth thus full of God's blessings, the writer passes to the *sea*, which, in its immensity, and as a scene and means of man's activity in commerce, and the home of countless multitude of creatures, also displays divine power and beneficence. The mention of **leviathan** — (Job, 40. 20)

heightens the estimate of the sea's greatness, and of His power who gives such a place for sport to one of His creatures. 27-30. The entire dependance of this immense family on God is set forth. With *to kill or make alive* is equally easy. *To hide His face* is to withdraw favour (Psalm 13. 1). By His *spirit*, or *breath*, or mere word, He gives life. It is His constant providence which repairs the waste of time and disease. 31-34. While God could equally glorify His power in destruction, that He does it in preservation is of His rich goodness and mercy, so that we may well spend our lives in grateful praise, honouring to Him, and delightful to pious hearts (Psalm 147. 1). 35. Those who refuse such a protector and withhold such a service mar the beauty of His works, and must perish from His presence. The Psalm closes with an invocation of praise, the translation of a *Hebrew* phrase, which is used as an English word, "*Hallelujah*," and may have served the purpose of a chorus as often as in our psalmody, or to give fuller expression to the writer's emotions. It is peculiar to Psalms composed after the captivity, as *Selah* is to those of an earlier date.

## PSALM CV.

**Ver. 1-45.** After an exhortation to praise God, addressed especially to the chosen people, the writer presents the special reasons for praise, in a summary of their history from the calling of Abraham to their settlement in Canaan, and reminds them that their obedience was the end of all God's gracious dealings.

**1. call..name** — (Psalm 79. 6; Romans, 10. 13).—Call on Him, according to His historically manifested glory. After the example of Abraham, who, as often as God acquired for Himself a name in guiding him, *called* in solemn worship upon the name of the Lord (Genesis, 12. 8; 13. 4). **among the people** — or, peoples (Psalm 18. 49). **deeds** — or, wonders (Psalm 103. 7). 3, 4. Seeking God's favour is the only true mode of getting true happiness, and *His strength* is the only true source of protection (cf. Psalm 32. 11; 40. 16). **glory..name** — Boast in His perfections. The world glories in its horses and chariots against the Church of God lying in the dust; but *our* hope is in the name, *i.e.*, the power and love of God to His people, manifested in past deliverances. 5, 6. **judgments..mouth** — His judicial decisions for the good and against the wicked. **chosen** — rather qualifies *children* than *Jacob*, as a plural. 7. Rather, "He, Jehovah, is our God." His title, **JEHOVAH**, implies that He, the unchangeable, self-existing Being, makes things to be, *i.e.*, fulfils His promises, and therefore will not forsake His people. Though specially of His people, He is God over all. 8-11. The covenant was often ratified. **commanded** — or, ordained (Psalm 68. 28). **word** — answering to "covenant" in the parallel clause, *viz.*, the word of promise, which, according to *v.* 10, He set forth for an inviolable law. **to a..generations** — perpetually. A verbal allusion to Deuteronomy, 7. 9. (cf. Exodus, 20. 6). 9. **which covenant** — or, "Word," (*v.* 8). 10, 11. Alluding to God's promise to Jacob (Genesis, 28. 13). Out of the whole store-house of the promises of God, only one is prominently brought forward, namely, that concerning the

possession of Canaan. Every thing revolves round this. The wonders and judgments have all for their ultimate design the fulfilment of this promise 12 15. **few .in number** — alluding to Jacob's words (Genesis, 34. 30), 'I being *few in number*.' **yea, very few** — *lit.*, "as a few," *i.e.*, like fewness itself (cf. Isaiah, 1. 9). **strangers** — sojourners in the land of their future inheritance, as in a strange country (Hebrews, 11. 9) 13. **from one nation to another** — and so from danger to danger: now in Egypt, now in the wilderness, and lastly in Canaan. Though a few strangers, wandering among various nations, God protected them. **reproved kings** — Pharaoh, of Egypt and Abimelech of Gerar (Genesis, 12. 17; 20. 3). **touch not** — Referring to Genesis, 26. 11, when Abimelech says of Isaac, "He that *toucheth* this man or his wife shall surely be put to death." **mine anointed** — **as** specially consecrated to me (Psalm 2. 2). The patriarch was the prophet, priest, and king of his family. **my prophets** — in a similar sense (cf. Genesis, 20. 7). The "anointed" are those vessels of God, consecrated to His service, "in whom (as Pharaoh said of Joseph, Genesis, 41. 38) the Spirit of God is." [HENGSTENBERG]. 16. God ordered the famine. God "*called for* famine," as if it were a *servant*, ready to come at God's bidding. Cf. the centurion's words, as to disease being God's servant (Matthew, 8. 8, 9). **staff of bread** — what supports life (Leviticus, 26. 26; Psalms 104. 15; Isaiah, 3. 1). **upon the land** — *viz.*, Canaan (Genesis, 41. 54). 17-21. Joseph was sent of God (Genesis, 45. 5). **hurt with fetters** — (Genesis, 40. 3). **was laid in iron** — *lit.*, *his soul*, or, he (Psalm 16. 10) came into iron, or, he was bound to his grief (cf. Psalm 3. 2; 11. 1). Joseph is referred to, as being an appropriate type of those "bound in affliction and iron" (Psalm 107. 10). The "soul" is put for the whole person, because the soul of the captive suffers still more than the body. **his word came** — His prophecy (Genesis, 41. 11-20) to the officers came to pass, or was fulfilled (Judges, 13. 12, 17; 1 Samuel, 9. 6, explain the form of speech). **the word** [or, saying, or, decree] **of the Lord tried** [or, proved] **him** — by the afflictions it appointed him to endure before his elevation (cf. Genesis, 41. 40-43). 22. **to bind** — Not literally *bind*; but, *exercise over them absolute control*; as the parallel in the second clause shows; also Genesis, 41. 40, 44, in which not literal *fettering*, but *commanding obedience* is spoken of. It refers to *v.* 18. The soul that was once *bound* itself now *binds* others, even princes. The same moral *binding* is assigned to the saints (Psalm 149. 8). **teach. . senators wisdom** — the ground of his exaltation by Pharaoh was his *wisdom* (Genesis, 41. 39), *viz.*, in state policy, and ordering well a kingdom. 23-25. **Israel. . and Jacob** — *i.e.*, Jacob himself is meant, as *v.* 24 speaks of *his people*. Still he came with his whole house (Genesis, 46. 6, 7). **sojourned** — (Genesis, 47. 4). **land of Ham** — or, Egypt (Psalm 78. 51). **turned their heart** — God controls men's free acts (cf. 1 Samuel, 10. 9). "When Saul had turned his back to go from (God's prophet) Samuel, God *turned* (*Margin*) him to another heart" (see Exodus, 1. 8, etc). Whatever evil the wicked man plots against God's people, God holds bound even his heart, so as not to lay a single plan except what God permits. Thus Isaiah (43. 17) saith it was *God* who *brought forth the army* of Pharaoh to pursue Israel to their own destruction (Exodus, 4.



21; 7. 3). **Moses..chosen** — both what they were by divine choice (Psalm 78. 70). 27. **signs** — *lit., words of signs*, or rather, as *words* in Hebrew mean *things*, “things of His signs,” *i.e.*, His marvellous tokens of power (Psalm 145. 5, *Margin*). Cf. the same Hebraism (Psalm 65. 3, *Margin*). 28-36. The ninth plague is made prominent as peculiarly wonderful. **they rebelled not** — Moses and Aaron promptly obeyed God (Hebrews, 11. 27), (cf. Exodus, 7-11, and Psalm 78. 44-51, with which this summary substantially agrees). Or rather, the “darkness” here is figurative (Jeremiah, 13. 16), the literal plague of darkness (Exodus, 10. 22, 23) being only *alluded to* as the symbol of God's wrath which overhung Egypt as a dark cloud during all the plagues. Hence it is placed first, out of the historical order. Thus, “They rebelled not (*i.e.*, no longer) against His word,” refers to *the Egyptians*. Whenever God sent a plague on them, *they were ready to let Israel go*, though refusing when the plague ceased. “His word” is His command to let Israel go. [HENGSTENBERG.] Of the ten plagues, only eight are mentioned, the fifth, the murrain of beasts, and the sixth, the boils, being omitted. 29, 30. He deprived them of their favourite *fish*, and gave them instead out of the water, loathsome *frogs*, and (*v.* 31) upon their land tormenting flies (*the dog-fly*, according to MAURER) and lice (*gnats*, HENGSTENBERG). 32. **hail for rain** — instead of fertilising showers, hail destructive to trees. This forms the transition to the vegetable kingdom. The locusts in *v.* 34, similarly are destructive to plants. **gave them** — referring to Leviticus, 26. 4, “I give you rain in due season.” His “gift” to Israel's foes is one of a very different kind from that bestowed on His people. 33. **their coasts** — all their land (Psalm 78. 52). 34. **catterpillars** — *lit., the lickers up*, devouring insects; probably, *the hairy winged locust*. 36. **the chief** — *lit., the firstlings, etc.* The ascending climax passes from the food of man to man himself. The language here is quoted from Psalm 78. 51. 37. **with silver and gold** — *presented* them by the Egyptians, as an acknowledgment due for their labours in their bondage (cf. Exodus, 12. 35). **one feeble person** — or, stumbler, unfit for the line of march. Cf. “harnessed,” *i.e.*, accoutred and marshalled as an army on march (Exodus, 13. 18; Isaiah, 5. 27). 38. (Cf. Exodus, 12. 33; Deuteronomy, 11. 25). 39. **covering** — in sense of protection (cf. Exodus, 13. 21; Numbers, 10. 34). In the burning sands of the desert the cloud protected the congregation from the heat of the sun; an emblem of God's protecting favour over His people, as interpreted by Isaiah (Isaiah, 4. 5, 6; cf. Numbers, 9. 16). 42-45. The reasons for these dealings: (1) God's faithfulness to His covenant, “His holy promise” of Canaan is the fountain whence bowed so many acts of marvellous kindness to His people (cf. *v.* 3. 11). Exodus, 2. 24, is the fundamental passage. [HENGSTENBERG.] (2) that they might be obedient. The observance of God's commands by Abraham was the object of the covenant with him (Genesis, 18. 19); as it was also the object of the covenant with Israel, that they might observe God's statutes. **remembered.. and Abraham** — or, “remembered His holy word (*i.e.*, covenant confirmed) with Abraham.” **inherited the labour** — *i.e.*, the fruits of their labour; their corn and vineyards (Joshua, 21. 42-45).

## PSALM CVI.

**Ver. 1-48.** This Psalm gives a detailed confession of the sins of Israel in all periods of their history, with special reference to the terms of the covenant as intimated (Psalm 105. 45). It is introduced by praise to God for the wonders of His mercy, and concluded by a supplication for His favour to His afflicted people, and a doxology.

**1. praise, etc.**—(Psalm 104. 24), begins and ends the Psalm, intimating the obligations of praise however we sin and suffer. 1 Chronicles, 16. 34-36, is the source from which the beginning and end of this Psalm are derived. **2.** His acts exceed our comprehension, as His praise our powers of expression (Romans, 11. 33). Their unutterable greatness is not to keep us back, but to urge us the more, to try to praise Him as best we can (Psalm 40. 5; 71. 15). **3.** The blessing is limited to those whose principles and acts are right. How "blessed" Israel would be now, if he had "observed God's statutes" (Psalm 105. 45). **4, 5.** In view of the desert of sins to be confessed, the writer invokes God's covenant mercy to himself and the Church, in whose welfare he rejoices. The speaker, *me, I*, is not the Psalmist himself, but the people, the present generation (cf. *v.* 6). **visit**—(cf. Psalm 8. 4). **see the good**—participate in it (Psalm 37. 13). **thy chosen**—*viz.*, Israel, God's elect (Isaiah, 43. 20; 45. 4). As God seems to have *forgotten* them, they pray that he would "remember" them with the favour which *belongs* to His own people, and which once they had enjoyed. **thine inheritance**—Deuteronomy, 9. 29; 32. 9). **6.** Cf. 1 Kings, 8. 47; Daniel, 9. 5, where the same three verbs occur in the same order and connection, the original of the two later passages being the first one, the prayer of Solomon in dedicating the temple. **sinned... fathers**—like them, and so partaking of their guilt. The terms denote a rising gradation of sinning (cf. Psalm 1. 1). **with our fathers**—we and they together forming one mass of corruption. **7-12.** Special confession. Their rebellion at the sea (Exodus, 14. 11) was because they had not remembered nor understood God's miracles on their behalf. That God saved them in their unbelief was of His mere mercy, and for His own glory. **the sea... the red sea**—the very words in which Moses' song celebrated the scene of Israel's deliverance (Exodus, 15. 4). Israel began to rebel against God at the very moment and scene of his deliverance by God! **8. for his name's sake**—(Ezekiel, 20. 14). **9. rebuked**—(Psalm 104. 7). **as through the wilderness**—(Isaiah, 63. 11-14). **12. believed... his words**—this is said not to praise the Israelites, but God, who constrained even so unbelieving a people momentarily to "believe," whilst in immediate view of His wonders, a faith they immediately after lost (*v.* 13; Exodus, 14. 31; 15. 1). **13-15.** The faith induced by God's display of power in their behalf was short-lived, and their new rebellion and temptation was visited by God with fresh punishment, inflicted by leaving them to the result of their own gratified appetites, and sending on them spiritual poverty (Numbers, 11. 18). **They soon forgot**—*lit.*, *They hasted, they forgot* (cf. Exodus, 32. 8). "They have turned aside *quickly* (or *hastily*) out of the way." The haste of our desires is such that we can scarcely allow God one day. Unless

He immediately answer our call, instantly then arise impatience, and at length despair. **his words**—(Deuteronomy, II. 3, 4; Daniel, 9. 14). **his counsel**—they waited not for the development of God's counsel, or *plan for their deliverance*, at His own time, and in His own way. 14. *Lit., lusted a lust* (quoted from Numbers, II. 4, *Margin*). Previously, there had been impatience as *to necessities* of life; here it is *lusting* (Psalm 78. 18). 15. **but sent leanness**—rather, “*and sent*” *i.e., and thus, even in doing so*, the punishment was inflicted at the very time, their request was granted. So Psalm 78. 30, “While their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them.” **soul**—the animal soul, which craves for food (Numbers, II. 6; Psalm 107. 18). This soul got its wish, and with it and in it its own punishment. The place was therefore called *Kibroath-Hattaawah*, “the graves of lust,” because there they buried the people who had lusted. Animal desires when gratified mostly give only a hungry craving for more (Jeremiah, 2. 13). 16-18. All *the* congregation took part with Dathan, Korah, etc., and their accomplices (Numbers, 16. 41). **Aaron the saint**—*lit., the holy one*, as consecrated priest; not a moral attribute, but one designating his office as *holy* to the Lord. The rebellion was followed by a double punishment; (1) (*v.* 17) of the *non-Levitical* rebels, the Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram, etc. (Deuteronomy, II. 6; Numbers, 26. 10), these were swallowed up by the earth. **covered**—“closed upon them” (Numbers, 16. 23) (2) Of the *Levitical* rebels, with Korah at their head (*v.* 18; Numbers, 16. 35; 20. 10), these had *sinned* by fire, and were punished by fire, as Aaron's (being high priest) sons had been (Leviticus, 10. 2; Numbers, 16. 1-35). 19-23. From indirect setting God at nought, they pass to direct. **made**—though prohibited in Exodus, 20. 4, 5, to *make a likeness*, even of the true God. **calf**—called so in contempt. They would have made an ox or bull, but their idol turned out but a calf; an imitation of the divine symbols, the cherubim; or of the sacred bull of Egyptian idolatry. This idolatry was more sinful in view of their recent experience of God's power in Egypt and His wonders at Sinai (Exodus, 32. 1-6). Though intending to worship Jehovah under the symbol of the calf, yet as this was incompatible with His nature (Deuteronomy, 4. 15-17), they in reality gave up Him, and so were given up by Him. Instead of the Lord of heaven, they had as their glory the image of an ox that does nothing but eat grass. 23. **he said**—*viz., to Moses* (Deuteronomy, 9. 13). With God, *saying* is as certain as *doing*; but His purpose, whilst full of wrath against sin, takes into account the mediation of Him of whom Moses was the type (Exodus, 32. 11-14; Deuteronomy, 9. 18, 19). **Moses his chosen**—*i.e., to be His servant* (cf. Psalm 105. 26). **in the breach**—as a warrior covers with his body the broken part of a wall or fortress besieged, a perilous place (Ezekiel, 13. 5; 22. 30). **to turn away** [or, prevent] **his wrath**—(Number, 25. 11; Psalm 78. 38). 24-27. The sin of refusing to invade Canaan “the pleasant land” (Jeremiah, 3. 19; Ezekiel, 20. 6; Daniel, 8. 9) “the land of beauty,” was punished by the destruction of that generation (Numbers, 14. 28), and the threat of dispersion (Deuteronomy, 4. 25; 28. 32) afterwards made to their posterity, and fulfilled in the great calamities now bewailed, may have also been then added. **despised**—(Numbers, 14. 31). **believed not his word**—by

which He promised He would give them the land; but rather the word of the faithless spies (cf. Psalm 78. 22). **lifted up his hand**—or, swore, the usual form of swearing (cf. Numbers, 14. 30, *Margin*). 27. **To overthrow**—*lit.*, “*To make them fall*,” alluding to the words (Numbers, 14. 39). **among...nations lands**—the “wilderness” was not more destructive to the *fathers* (*v.* 26), than residence among the heathen (“nations”) shall be to the children. Leviticus, 26. 33, 38, is here before the Psalmist’s mind, the determination against the “seed,” when rebellious, being not *expressed* in Numbers, 14. 31-33, but *implied* in the determination against the fathers. 28-30. **sacrifices of the dead**—*i.e.*, of lifeless idols, contrasted with “the living God” (Jeremiah, 10. 3-10; cf. Psalm 115. 4-7; 1 Corinthians, 12. 2). On the words, “joined themselves to Baal-Peor,” see Numbers, 25. 2, 3, 5. Baal-Peor, *i.e.*, the *possessor of Peor*, the mountain on which *Chemosh*, the idol of Moab, was worshipped, and at the foot of which Israel at the time lay encamped (Numbers, 23. 28). The name never occurs except in connection with that locality and with that circumstance. **provoked**—excited grief and indignation (Psalm 6. 7; 78. 58). **stood**—as Aaron “stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed” (Numbers, 16. 48). **executed judgment**—*lit.*, *judged, including sentence and act*. 31. **counted...righteousness**—“a just and rewardable action.” **for**—or, *unto*, to the procuring of righteousness, as in Romans, 4. 2; 10. 4. Here it was a particular act, not faith, nor its object Christ; and *what was procured* was not justifying righteousness or what was to be rewarded with eternal life; for no one act of man’s can be taken for complete obedience. But it was that which God approved and rewarded with a perpetual priesthood to him and his descendants (Numbers, 25. 13; 1 Chronicles, 6. 4, etc.) 32, 33. (Cf. Numbers, 20. 3-12; Deuteronomy, 1. 37; 3. 26). **went ill with**—[*lit.*, *was bad for*] **Moses**—his conduct, though under great provocation, was punished by exclusion from Canaan. 34-39. They not only failed to expel the heathen, as God “commanded” (Exodus, 23. 32, 33), *lit.*, *said (they should)*, but conformed to their idolatries, and thus became spiritual adulterers (Psalm 73. 27). **unto devils**—*Septuagint*, demons (cf. 1 Corinthians, 10. 20), or evil spirits. **polluted with blood**—*lit.*, *blood*, or *murder* (Psalm 5. 6; 26. 9). 40-43. Those nations first seduced and then oppressed them (cf. Judges, 1. 34; 2. 14; 3. 30). Their apostasies ungratefully repaid God’s many mercies till He finally abandoned them to punishment (Leviticus, 26. 39). 44-46. If, as is probable, this Psalm was written at the time of the captivity, the writer now intimates the tokens of God’s returning favour. **repented**—(cf. Psalm 90. 13). **made...pitied**—(1 Kings, 8. 50; Daniel, 1. 9). These tokens encourage the prayer and the promise of praise (Psalm 30. 4), which is well closed by a doxology.

## PSALM CVII.

**Ver. 1-43.** Although the general theme of this Psalm may have been suggested by God’s special favour to the Israelites in their restoration from captivity, it must be regarded as an instructive celebration of God’s praise for His merciful providence to all men in their various emergen-

cies. Of these several are given: captivity and bondage, wanderings by land and sea, and famine; some as evidences of God's displeasure, and all the deliverances as evidences of His goodness and mercy to them who humbly seek Him.

1, 2. This call for thankful praise is the burden or chorus (cf. v. 8, 15, etc). **redeemed of the Lord**—(cf. Isaiah, 35. 9, 10). **say**—*i.e.*, that His mercy, etc. **hand of**—or, power of enemy. 3. **gathered**—alluding to the dispersion of captives throughout the Babylonian empire. **from the south**—*lit.*, *the sea*, or, *Red sea* (Psalm 114. 3.), which was on the south. 4-7. A graphic picture is given of the sufferings of those who from distant lands returned to Jerusalem; or, as city of habitation may mean the land of Palestine. **fainted**—was overwhelmed (Psalm 61. 3; 77. 3.). 8, 9. To the chorus is added, as a reason for praise, an example of the extreme distress from which they had been delivered—extreme hunger, the severest privation of a journey in the desert. 10-16. Their sufferings were for their rebellion against (Psalm 105. 28) the words, or purposes, or promises, of God for their benefit. When humbled they cry to God, who delivers them from bondage, described as a dark dungeon with doors and bars of metal, in which they are bound in iron—*i.e.*, chains and fetters. **shadow of death**—darkness with danger (Psalm 23. 4.). **broken**—*lit.*, *shivered* (Isaiah 45. 2.). 17-22. Whether the same or not, this exigency illustrates that dispensation of God, according to which sin brings its own punishment. **are afflicted**—*lit.*, *afflict themselves*, *i.e.*, bring on disease, denoted by loathing of food, and drawing **near unto** (*lit.*, *even to*) **the gates** [or domain, Psalm 9. 16] **of death**. **sent his word**—*i.e.*, put forth His power. **their destructions**—*i.e.*, that which threatened them. To the chorus is added the mode of giving thanks, by a sacrifice and joyful singing (Psalm 50. 14.). 23-32. Here are set forth the perils of sea-faring, futility of man's and efficiency of God's help. **go . . . sea**—Alluding to the elevation of the land at the coast. **these see . . . deep**—Illustrated both by the storm He raises and the calm He makes with a word (Psalm 38. 9.). **waves thereof**—*lit.*, *His waves* (God's) (Psalm 42. 7.) **are . . . end**—*lit.*, *all their wisdom swallows up itself*, destroys itself by vain and contradictory devices, such as despair induces. **he maketh . . . calm**—or, to stand to stillness, or in quiet. Instead of acts of temple worship, those of the synagogue are here described, where the people with the *assembly*, or *session* of elders, convened for reading, singing, prayer, and teaching. 33-41. God's providence is illustriously displayed in His influence on two great elements of human prosperity, the earth's productiveness, and the powers of government. He punishes the wicked by destroying the sources of fertility, or, in mercy, gives fruitfulness to deserts, which become the homes of a busy and successful agricultural population. By a permitted misrule and tyranny, this scene of prosperity is changed to one of adversity. He rules rulers, putting up one and putting down another. **wander . . . wilderness**—reduced to misery (Job, 12. 24.). 42, 43. In this providential government, good men will rejoice, and the cavils of the wicked will be stopped (Job, 5. 16; Isaiah, 52. 15). and all who take right views will appreciate God's **unfailing mercy** and unbounded love.

PSALM CVIII.

**Ver. 1-13.** This Psalm is composed. *v.* 1-5 of Psalm 57. 7-11, and *v.* 6-12 of Psalm 60. 5-12. The varieties are verbal and trivial, except that in *v.* 9. "over Philistia will I triumph," differs from Psalm 60. 8, the interpretation of which it confirms. Its altogether triumphant tone may intimate that it was prepared by David, omitting the plaintive portions of the other Psalms, as commemorative of God's favour in the victories of His people.

PSALM CIX.

**Ver. 1-31.** The writer complains of his virulent enemies, on whom he imprecates God's righteous punishment, and to a prayer for a divine interposition in his behalf appends the expression of his confidence and a promise of his praises. This Psalm is remarkable for the number and severity of its imprecations. Its evident typical character (*cf.* *v.* 8) justifies the explanation of these already given, that as the language of David respecting his own enemies, or those of Christ, it has respect not to the penitent, but to the impenitent and implacable foes of good men, and of God and His cause, whose inevitable fate is thus indicated by inspired authority.

**1. God of my praise**—its object, thus recognising God as a certain helper. *Be not silent* (*cf.* Psalm 17. 13; 28. 1). **2. For the mouth . . . opened** [or, They have opened a wicked mouth] **against me**—*lit., with me, i.e.,* Their intercourse is lying, or, they slander me to my face (Matthew, 26. 59). **3.** (*Cf.* Psalm 35. 7; 69. 4.). **4, 5.** They return evil for good (*cf.* Psalm 27. 12; Proverbs, 17. 13.). **I give myself unto prayer**—or *lit., I (am) prayer,* or, as for me, prayer, *i.e.,* it is my resource for comfort in distress. **6. over him**—one of his enemies prominent in malignity (Psalm 55: 12.). **let Satan stand**—as an accuser whose place was the right hand of the accused (Zachariah, 3. 1, 2.). **7.** The condemnation is aggravated, when prayer for relief is treated as a sin. **8.** The opposite blessing is long life (Psalm 91. 16; Proverbs, 3. 2.). The last clause is quoted as to Judas by Peter (Acts, 1. 20.), **office**—*lit., charge, Septuagint,* and Peter, oversight. **9, 10.** Let his family share the punishment, his children be as wandering beggars to prowl in their desolate homes, a greedy and relentless creditor grasp his substance, his labour, or the fruit of it, enure to strangers and not his heirs, and his unprotected, fatherless children fall in want, so that his posterity shall utterly fail. **13. posterity**—*lit., end,* as Psalm 37. 38, or, what comes after, *i.e.,* reward, or success, or its expectation, of which posterity was to a Jew a prominent part. **14, 15.** Added to the terrible overthrow following on his own sin, let there be the imputation of his parents' guilt, that it may now come before God, for His meeting out its full consequences, in cutting off the memory of them (*i.e.,* the parents) from the earth (Psalm 34. 16.). **16.** Let God remember guilt, because **he** (the wicked) did not remember mercy. **poor and needy . . . broken in heart**—*i.e.,* pious sufferer (Psalm 34. 18; 35. 10; 40. 17.). **17-19.** Let his loved sin, cursing, come upon him in punishment (Psalm 35. 8),

thoroughly fill him as water and oil, permeating to every part of his system (cf. Numbers, 5. 22-27), and become a garment and a girdle for a perpetual dress. 20. **Let this . . . reward** — or, wages, pay for labour, the fruit of the enemy's wickedness. **from the Lord** — as His judicial act. 21, 22. **do . . . for me** — *i.e.*, kindness. **wounded** — *lit.*, *pierced* (Psalm 69. 16, 29). 23. **like the shadow** — (cf. Psalm 102. 11). **tossed up and down** — or, driven (Exodus, 10. 19). 24, 25. Taunts and reproaches aggravate his afflicted and feeble state (Psalm 22. 6, 7.). 26, 27. Let my deliverance glorify thee (cf. Psalm 69. 13.). 28-31. In confidence that God's blessing would come on him, and confusion and shame on his enemies (Psalm 73. 13), he ceases to regard their curses, and anticipates a season of joyful and public thanksgiving; for God is near to protect (Psalm 16. 8; 34. 6) the poor from all unrighteous judges who may condemn him.

## PSALM CX.

**Ver. 1-7.** The explicit application of this Psalm to our Saviour, by Him (Matthew, 22. 42-45), and by the apostles (Acts, 2. 34; 1 Corinthians, 15. 25; Hebrews, 1. 13), and their frequent reference to its language and purport (Ephesians, 1. 20-22; Philemon, 2. 9-11; Hebrews, 10. 12, 13), leave no doubt of its purely prophetic character. Not only was there nothing in the position or character, personal or official, of David or any other descendant, to justify a reference to either, but the utter severance from the royal office of all priestly functions (so clearly assigned the subject of this Psalm) positively forbids such a reference. The Psalm celebrates the exaltation of Christ to the throne of an eternal and increasing kingdom, and a perpetual priesthood (Zechariah, 6. 13), involving the subjugation of His enemies and the multiplication of His subjects, and rendered infallibly certain by the word and oath of Almighty God.

**1. the Lord said** — *lit.*, *A saying of the Lord* (cf. Psalm 36. 1), a formula, used in prophetic or other solemn or express declarations. **my Lord** — That the Jews understood this term to denote the Messiah their traditions show, and Christ's mode of arguing on such an assumption (Matthew, 22. 44) also proves. *To sit at the right hand* was not only a mark of honour (1 Kings, 2. 19), but also implied participation of power (Psalm 45. 9; Mark, 16. 19; Ephesians, 1. 20). **sit** — as a king (Psalm 29. 10), though the position rather than posture is intimated (cf. Acts, 7. 55, 56.) **until I make, etc.** — The dominion of Christ over His enemies, as commissioned by God, and intrusted with all power (Matthew, 28. 18) for their subjugation, will assuredly be established (1 Corinthians, 15. 24-28). This is neither His government as God, nor that which, as the incarnate Saviour, He exercises over His people, of whom he will ever be Head. **thine enemies thy footstool** — an expression taken from the custom of Eastern conquerors (cf. Joshua, 10. 24; Judges, 1. 7), to signify a complete subjection. **2. the rod of thy strength** — the rod of correction (Isaiah, 9. 4; 10. 15; Jeremiah, 48. 12), by which thy strength will be known. This is His word of truth (Isaiah, 2. 3; 11. 4), converting some and confounding others (cf. 2

Thessalonians, 2. 8). **out of Zion** — or, the Church, in which God dwells by His Spirit, as once by a visible symbol in the tabernacle on Zion (cf. Psalm 2. 6),—**rule thou, etc.** — over enemies now conquered. **in their midst** — once set upon, as by ferocious beasts (Psalm 22. 16), now humbly, though reluctantly confessed as Lord (Philippians, 2. 10, 11.) 3. **thy people . . . willing** — *lit.*, *Thy people are free-will offerings* ; for such is the proper rendering of the word "*willing*," which is a plural noun, and not an adjective (cf. Exodus, 25. 2 ; Psalm 54. 6), also a similar form (Judges, 5. 2-9). **in the day of thy power** — thy people freely offer themselves (Romans, 12. 1) in thy service, enlisting under thy banner. **in the beauties of holiness** — either as Psalm 29. 2, thy loveliness of a spiritual worship, of which the temple service, in all its material splendours, was but a type ; or more probably, the appearance of the worshippers, who, in this spiritual kingdom, are a nation of kings and priests (1 Peter, 2. 9 ; Revelation, 1. 5) attending this Priest and King, clothed in those eminent graces which the beautiful vestments of the Aaronic priests (Leviticus, 16. 4) typified. The last very obscure clause — **from the womb . . . youth** — may, according to this view, be thus explained: The word *youth* denotes a period of life distinguished for strength and activity (cf. Ecclesiastes, 11. 9),— the *dew* is a constant emblem of whatever is refreshing, and strengthening (Proverbs, 19. 12 ; Hosea, 14. 5). The Messiah, then, as leading His people, is represented as continually in the vigour of youth, refreshed and strengthened by the early dew of God's grace and Spirit. Thus the phrase corresponds as a member of a parallelism with "*the day of thy power*" in the first clause. to "*In the beauties of holiness*" belongs to this latter clause, corresponding "*Thy people*" in the first, and the colon after "morning" is omitted. Others prefer: Thy youth, or youthful vigour, or body, shall be constantly refreshed by successive accessions of people, as dew from the early morning ; and this accords with the New Testament idea that the Church is Christ's body (cf. Micah, 5. 7). 4. The perpetuity of the priesthood, here asserted on God's oath, corresponds with that of the kingly office just explained. **after the order** — (Hebrews, 7. 15), after the similitude of Melchisedec, is fully expounded by Paul, to denote not only perpetuity, appointment of God, and a royal priesthood, but also the absence of priestly descent and succession, and superiority to the Aaronic order. 5. **at thy right hand** — as Psalm 109. 31, upholding and aiding, which is not inconsistent with *v.* 7, where the figure denotes participation of power, for here He is presented in another aspect, as a warrior going against enemies, and sustained by God. **strike through** — smite or crush. **kings** — not common men, but their rulers, and so all under them (Psalm 2. 2, 10). 6. The person is again changed. The Messiah's conquests are described, though His work and God's are the same. As after a battle, whose field is strewn with corpses, the conqueror ascends the seat of empire, so shall He judge or rule among many nations, and subdue **the head** [or (as used collectively for many) the heads] **over many lands.** **wound** — *lit.*, *smite*, or, *crush* (cf. *v.* 5). 7. As a conqueror, "faint, yet pursuing," He shall be refreshed by "*the brook in the way*," and pursue to completion His divine and glorious triumph.



## PSALM CXI.

**Ver. 1-10.** The Psalmist celebrates God's gracious dealings with His people, of which a summary statement is given.

**1. Praise ye the Lord** — or, *Hallelujah* (Psalm 104. 35). This seems to serve as a title to those of the later Psalms, which, like this, set forth God's gracious government and its blessed fruits. This praise claims the *whole heart* (Psalm 86. 12), and rendered publicly. **upright** — a title of the true Israel (Psalm 32. 11). **2.** His *works i.e.*, of providence and grace, are sought — or, carefully studied, by all desiring to know them. **3, 4. honourable and glorious** — *lit.*, *honour and majesty*, which illustrate His glorious perfections. **righteousness** — (Psalm 7. 17; 31. 1), which He has made memorable by wonders of love and mercy, in supplying the wants of His people according to covenant engagements. **6-8.** His power was shown especially in giving them the promised land, and His faithfulness and justice thus displayed are, like His precepts, reliable and of permanent obligation. **9.** The deliverance He provided accorded to His established covenant. Thus He manifested Himself in the sum of His perfections (Psalm 20. 1, 7; 22. 3) worthy of reverence. **10.** And hence, love and fear of such a God is the chief element of true wisdom (cf. Proverbs, 1. 7; 9. 10).

## PSALM CXII.

**Ver. 1-10.** This Psalm may be regarded as an exposition of Psalm 111. 10, presenting the happiness of those who fear and obey God, and contrasting the fate of the ungodly.

**1.** True fear produces obedience and this happiness. **2, 3.** Temporal blessings follow the service of God, exceptions occurring only as they are seen by God to be inconsistent with those spiritual blessings which are better. **4. light** — *fig.*, for relief (Psalm 27. 1; 97. 11). The *upright* are like God (Leviticus, 6. 36; Psalm 111. 4). **5-9.** Generosity, sound judgment in business, and confidence in God, for a character which preserves from fear of evil and insures success against enemies. While a man thus pious is liberal, he increases in substance. **not be moved** — (cf. Psalm 13. 4; 15. 5). **heart is established** — or, firm in right principles. **see his desire** — (Psalm 50. 23; 54. 7). **10.** Disappointed in their malevolent wishes by the prosperity of the pious, the wicked are punished by the working of their evil passions, and come to nought.

## PSALM CXIII.

**Ver. 1-9.** God's majesty contrasted with His condescension and gracious dealings towards the humble furnished matter and a call for praise. The Jews, it is said, used this and Psalm 114-118, on their great festivals, and called them the *Greater Hallel*, or *Hymn*.

**1-3.** Earnestness and zeal are denoted by the emphatic repetitions. **servants** — or, all the people of God. **name of the Lord** — perfections

(Psalm 5. 11; 111. 9.). **from the rising, etc.** — All the world. 4-6. God's exaltation enhances His condescension; 7, 8., which is illustrated as often in raising the worthy poor and needy to honour (cf. 1 Samuel, 2. 8; Psalm 44. 25). 9. On this special case, cf. 1 Samuel, 2. 21. Barrenness was regarded as a disgrace, and is a type of a deserted Church (Isaiah, 54. 1). **the barren women. . house** — *lit., the barren of the house*, so that the supplied words may be omitted.

## PSALM CXIV.

**Ver. 1-8.** The waiter briefly and beautifully celebrates God's former care of His people, to whose benefit nature was miraculously made to contribute.

**1-4. of strange language** — (cf. Psalm 81. 5). **skipped. . rams** — (Psalm 29. 6), describes the waving of mountain forests, poetically representing *the motion* of the mountains. The poetical description of the effect of God's presence on the sea and Jordan alludes to the history (Exodus, 14, 21; Joshua, 3. 14-17). *Judah* is put as a parallel to *Israel*, because of the destined as well as real prominence of that tribe. 5-8. The questions place the implied answers in a more striking form. **at the presence of** — *lit., from before*, as if affrighted by the wonderful display of God's power. Well may such a God be trusted, and great should be His praise.

## PSALM CXV.

**Ver. 1-18.** The Psalmist prays that God would vindicate His glory, which is contrasted with the vanity of idols, while the folly of their worshippers is contrasted with the trust of God's people, who are encouraged to its exercise and to unite in the praise which it will occasion.

**1-3.** The vindication of God's mercy and faithfulness (Psalm 25. 10; 36. 6) is the *glory* of His *name*, which is desired to be illustrated in the deliverance of His people, as the implied mode of its manifestation. In view of the taunts of the heathen, faith in His dominion as enthroned in the heaven (Psalm 2. 4; 11. 4) is avowed. **where is now, etc.** — *now* is "not a particle of time, but of entreaty," as in our forms of speech, "Come now," "See now," etc. 4-7. (Cf. Isaiah, 40. 18-20; 44. 9-20). **speak. . throat** — *lit., mutter*, not even utter articulate sounds. 8. **every one that trusteth** — they who trust, whether makers or not. 9-13. The repetitions imply earnestness. 14. Opposed to the decrease pending and during the captivity. 15-17. They were not only God's peculiar people, but as living inhabitants of earth, assigned the work of His praise as monuments of divine power, wisdom, and goodness. 18. Hence let us fulfil the purpose of our creation, and evermore show forth His praise.

## PSALM CXVI.

**Ver. 1-19.** The writer celebrates the deliverance from extreme perils by which he was favoured, and pledges grateful and pious public acknowledgments.

1, 2. A truly grateful love will be evinced by acts of worship, which *calling on God* expresses (*v.* 13; Psalm 55. 16; 86. 7; cf. Psalm 17. 6; 31. 2). 3, 4. For similar figures for distress (Psalm 18. 4, 5). **get hold upon me** — another sense (“found”) of the same word follows, as we speak of disease *finding* us, and of our finding or catching disease. 5-8. The relief which he asked is the result not of his merit, but of God’s known pity and tenderness, which is acknowledged in assuring himself his soul, Psalm 11. 1; 16. 10) of rest and peace. All calamities are represented by *death, tears, and falling of the feet* (Psalm 56. 13). 9. **walk before the Lord** — act, or live under His favour and guidance (Genesis, 17. 1; Psalm 61. 7). **land of the living** — (Psalm 27. 13); 10, 11. Confidence in God opposed to distrust of men, as not reliable (Psalm 68. 8, 9). He speaks from an experience of the result of his faith. **in my haste** — *lit., terror, or agitation*, produced by his affliction (cf. Psalm 31. 22). 12-14. These are modes of expressing acts of worship (cf. *v.* 4; Psalm 50. 14; Jonah, 2. 9). **the cup of salvation** — the drink-offering which was part of the thank-offering (Numbers, 15. 3-5). **now** — (cf. Psalm 115. 2) “oh! that (I may do it)” in the presence, etc. 15, 16. By the plea of being a home-born servant, he intimates his claim on God’s covenant love to His people. 17-19. An ample declaration of his purpose, designating the place the Lord’s house, or earthly residence in Jerusalem.

## PSALM CXVII.

**Ver. 1, 2.** This may be regarded as a doxology, suitable to be appended to any Psalm of similar character, and prophetic of the prevalence of God’s grace in the world, in which aspect Paul quotes it, (Romans, 15. 11) (cf. Psalm 47. 2; 66. 8).

**2. is great toward us** — *lit., prevailed over, or, protected us.*

## PSALM CXVIII.

**Ver. 1-29.** After invoking others to unite in praise, the writer celebrates God’s protecting and delivering care towards him, and then represents himself and the people of God as entering the sanctuary and uniting in solemn praise, with prayer for a continued blessing. Whether composed by David on his accession to power, or by some later writer in memory of the restoration from Babylon, its tone is joyful and trusting, and, in describing the fortune and destiny of the Jewish Church and its visible head, it is typically prophetic of the Christian Church and her greater and invisible Head.

1-4. The trine repetitions are emphatic (cf. *v.* 10-12, 15, 16; Psalm 115. 12, 13.). **Let . . . say** — Oh! that Israel may say. **now** — as Psalm 115. 2; so in *v.* 3, 4. After “*now say*” supply “*give thanks.*” **that his mercy** — or, *for* his mercy. 5. **distress** — *lit., straits*, to which “large place” corresponds, as Psalm 4. 1; 31. 8. 6, 7. Men are helpless to hurt him, if God be with him (Psalm 56. 9), and, if enemies, will be vanquished (Psalm 54. 7). 8, 9. Even the most powerful men are less to be trusted than God. 10-12. Though as numerous and irritat-

ing as bees, by God's help his enemies would be destroyed. **as the fire of thorns**— suddenly. **in the name**, etc.— by the power (Psalm 20. 5; 124. 8). 13-16. The enemy is triumphantly addressed as if present. **rejoicing and salvation**— the latter as cause of the former. **right hand . . . is exalted**— His power greatly exerted. 17, 18. He would live, because confident his life would be for God's glory. 19-21. Whether an actual or figurative entrance into God's house be meant, the purpose of solemn praise is intimated, in which only the righteous could or would engage. 22, 23. These words are applied by Christ (Matthew, 21. 42) to Himself as the foundation of the Church (cf. Acts, 4. 11; Ephesians, 2. 20; 1 Peter, 2. 4, 7). It may here denote God's wondrous exaltation to power and influence of him whom the rulers of the nation despised, whether (see above) David or Zerub-babel (cf. Haggai, 2. 2; Zachariah, 4. 7-10) be primarily meant, there is here typically represented God's more wonderful doings in exalting Christ, crucified as an impostor, to be the Prince and Saviour and Head of His Church. 24. **this is the day**— or, period distinguished by God's favour of all others. 25. **save now**— *Hebrew, Hosannah* (Psalm 115. 2, etc., as to *now*) a form of prayer (Psalm 20. 9) since, in our use, of praise. 26. **he that cometh . . . Lord**— As above intimated, this may be applied to the visible head of the Jewish Church entering the sanctuary, as leading the procession; typically it belongs to Him of whom the phrase became an epithet (Malachi, 3. 1; Matthew, 21. 9), 27-29. **showed us light**— or, favour (Psalm 27. 1; 97. 11). With the sacrificial victim brought bound to the altar is united the more spiritual offering of praise (Psalm 50. 14, 23), expressed in the terms with which the Psalm opened.

## PSALM CXIX.

**Ver. 1-16.** This celebrated Psalm has several peculiarities. It is divided into twenty-two parts, or stanzas, denoted by the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza contains eight verses, and the first letter of each verse is that which gives name to the stanza. Its contents are mainly praises of God's word, exhortation to its perusal, and reverence for it, prayers for its proper influence, and complaints of the wicked for despising it. There are but two verses (122, 132) which do not contain some term or description of God's word. These terms are of various derivations, but here used, for the most part, synonymously, though the use of a variety of terms seems designed, in order to express better the several aspects in which our relations to the revealed word of God are presented. The Psalm does not appear to have any relation to any special occasion or interest of the Jewish Church or nation, but was evidently "intended as a manual of pious thoughts, especially for instructing the young, and its purely artificial structure was probably adopted to aid the memory in retaining the language."

1. **undefiled**— *lit., complete*, perfect, or sincere (cf. Psalm 37. 37). **in [or, of] the way**— course of life. **walk [act] in the law**— according to the law (cf. Luke, 1. 6). *Law*, from a word meaning to teach, is a term of rather general purport, denoting the instruction of God's word.

2. **testimonies**— The word of God is so called, because in it **He testi-**

*fiēs* for truth and against sin. **seek him**—*i.e.*, a knowledge of Him, with desire for conformity to His will. 3. **his ways**—the course He reveals as right. 4-6. **precepts**—are those directions which relate to special conduct, from a word meaning to inspect. **statutes**—or, ordinances, positive laws of permanent nature. Both words originally denote rather positive than moral laws, such as derive force from the divine appointment whether their nature or the reasons for them are apprehended by us or not. **commandments**—or, institutions. The term is comprehensive, but rather denotes fundamental directions for conduct, both enjoining and forbidding. **have respect unto**—or, regard carefully as to their whole purport. 7. **judgments**—rules of conduct formed by God's judicial decisions. Hence the wide sense of the word in the Psalms, so that it includes decisions of approval as well as condemnation. 8. Recognises the need of divine grace.

9. The whole verse may be read as a question; for, **by taking heed**—is better, *For* taking heed, *i.e.*, so as to do it. The answer is implied, and inferable from *v.* 5, 10, 18, etc., *i.e.*, by God's grace. 10-16. We must carefully treasure up the word of God, declare it to others, meditate on it, and heartily delight in it, and then by His grace we shall act according to it.

17-20. Life is desirable in order to serve God: that we may do so aright we should seek to have our eyes opened to behold His truth, and earnestly desire fully to understand it. 21-24. God will rebuke those who despise His word, and deliver His servants from their reproach, giving them boldness in and by His truth, even before the greatest men.

25-27. Submitting ourselves in depression to God, He will revive us by His promises, and lead us to declare His mercy to others. 28-32. In order to adhere to His word we must seek deiivance from temptations to sin as well as from despondency. **enlarge** [or, expand] **my heart**—with gracious affections.

33-38. To encourage us in prayer for divine aid in adhering to His truth, we are permitted to believe that by His help we shall succeed, **the way of thy statutes**—*i.e.*, the way or manner of life prescribed by them. The help we hope to obtain by *prayer* is to be the basis on which our *resolutions* should rest. **turn away mine eyes**—*lit.*, *Make my eyes to pass, not noticing evil.* **vanity**—*lit.*, *falsehood*, all other objects of trust than God; idols, human power, etc. (Psalm 31. 6; 40. 4; 60. 11; 62. 9). **quicken...in thy way**—make me with *living* energy to pursue the way marked out by thee. *Revive* me from the *death* of spiritual helplessness (*v.* 17, 25, 40, 50; Psalm 116. 3). **who is devoted to thy fear**—or better, *which (i.e., thy word) is for thy fear*, for producing it. "Which is to those who fear thee." God's word of promise belongs peculiarly to such (cf. Genesis, 18. 19; 1 Kings, 2. 4; 8. 25). [HENGSTENBERG.] 39, 40. Our hope of freedom from the *reproach of inconsistency* is in God's power, quickening us to live according to His word, which He leads us to love. **for thy judgments are good**—the time must therefore be at hand when thy justice will turn the "reproach" from thy Church upon the world (Isaiah, 25. 8; 66. 5; Zephania, 2. 8-10).

41-44. The sentiment more fully carried out. God's mercies and salvation, as revealed in His Word, provide hope of forgiveness for the

past and security in a righteous course for the future. 42. The possession of God's gift of "salvation" (*v.* 41) will be the Psalmist's answer to the foe's "reproach," that his hope was a fallacious one. 45-48. To freedom from reproach, when imbued with God's truth, there is added "great boldness in the faith," accompanied with increasing delight in the holy law itself, which becomes an element of happiness. 48. **My hands . . . lift up unto . . . commandments** — *i.e.*, I will *prayerfully* (Psalm 28. 2) direct my heart to keep thy commandments.

49-51. Resting on the promises consoles under affliction and the tauntings of the insolent. 49. **upon which** — rather, "Remember thy word unto thy servant, *because*," etc. So the *Hebrew* requires. [HENGSTENBERG.] 50. **for** — rather, "This is my comfort . . . *that*," etc. [MAURER.] **hath quickened** — what the word *has already done* is to faith a pledge of what *it shall yet do*. 52-56. The pious take comfort, when harrassed and distressed by wickedness of men who forsake God's law, in remembering that the great principles of God's truth will still abide; and also God's "judgments of old" (*v.* 52), *i.e.*, His past interpositions in behalf of His people are a pledge that He will again interpose to deliver them; and they become the theme of constant and delightful meditation. The more we keep the more we love the law of God. 53. **horror** — rather, "Vehement wrath." [HENGSTENBERG.] 54. **songs** — as the exile sings songs of his home (Psalm 137. 3), so the child of God, "a stranger on earth," sing the songs of heaven, his true home (Psalm 39. 12). In ancient times, laws were put in verse, to imprint them the more on the memory of the people. So God's laws are the believer's songs. **house of my pilgrimage** — present life (Genesis, 17. 8; 47. 9; Hebrews, 11. 13). 56. Rather, "This is peculiarly mine (*lit.*, *to me*), *that* I keep thy precepts." [HENGSTENBERG and MAURER.]

57-60. Sincere desires for God's favour, penitence, and activity in a new obedience, truly evince the sincerity of those who profess to find God a portion (Numbers, 18. 20; Psalm 16. 5; Lamentations, 3. 24). 58. **favour** — *Hebrew*, "face" (Psalm 45. 12). 59. So the prodigal son, when reduced to straits of misery (Luke, 15. 17, 18). 61, 62. This the more, if opposition of enemies, or love of ease, is overcome in thus honouring God's law. **have robbed me** — better, surrounded me. either as forcible constraints, like fetters, or as the cords of their nets. HENGSTENBERG *translates*, "snares." 62. **at midnight** — HENGSTENBERG supposes a reference to the time when the Lord went forth to slay the Egyptian first-born (Exodus, 11. 4; 12. 29; cf. Job, 34. 20). But it rather refers to the Psalmist's own praises and prayers in the night time. Cf. Paul and Silas (Acts, 16. 25; cf. Psalm 63. 6). 63. The communion of the saints. Delight in their company is an evidence of belonging to them (Psalm 16. 3; Amos, 3. 3; Malachi, 3. 16). 64. While opposed by the wicked, and opposing them, the pious delight in those who fear God, but, after all, rely for favour and guidance not on merit but mercy.

65-67. The reliance on promises (*v.* 49) is strengthened by experience of past dealings according with promises, and a prayer for guidance, encouraged by sanctified affliction. 66. **teach me good judgment** — *viz.*, *in thy word* (so as to fathom its deep spirituality); for the corresponding expression (*v.* 12. 64, 68), is "Teach me thy statutes."

67. Referred by HENGSTENBERG to the chastening effect produced on the Jews' minds by the captivity (Jeremiah, 31. 18, 19). The truth is a general one (Job, 5. 6; John, 15. 2; Hebrews, 12. 11). 68. Cf. as to the Lord Jesus (Acts, 10. 38). 69, 70. The crafty malice of the wicked, in slandering him, so far from turning him away, but binds him closer to God's word, which they are too stupid in sin to appreciate. HENGSTENBERG refers the "lie" (*v.* 69) to such slanders against the Jews during the captivity, as that in Ezra, 4. of sedition. **fat as grease**—spiritually insensible (Psalm 17. 10; 73. 7; Isaiah, 6. 10). 71, 72. So also affliction of any kind acts as a wholesome discipline in leading the pious more highly to value the truth and promises of God.

73. As God made, so He can best control us. So as to Israel, he owed to God his whole internal and external existence (Deuteronomy, 32. 6). 74. So when He has led us to rely on His truth, He will "make us to the praise of His grace" by others. "Those who fear thee will be glad at my prosperity, as they consider my cause their cause" (Psalm 34. 2; 142. 7). 75-78. **in faithfulness**—*i.e.*, without in the least violating thy faithfulness; because my sins deserved and needed fatherly chastisement. Ending chastisement with a filial temper (Hebrews, 12. 6-11), God's promises of mercy (Romans, 8. 28) will be fulfilled, and He will give comfort in sorrow (Lamentations, 3. 22; 2 Corinthians, 1. 3, 4). 77. **let thy tender mercies come unto me**—As I am not able to come unto them. But the wicked will be confounded. 78. **but I . . . meditate in thy precepts**—and so shall not be "ashamed," *i.e.*, put to shame (*v.* 80). 79, 80. Those who may have thought his afflictions as evidence of God's rejection will then be led to return to Him; as the friends of Job did on his restoration, having been previously led through his afflictions to doubt the reality of his religion. **let my . . . be sound**—*i.e.*, *perfect, sincere*. **ashamed**—disappointed in my hope of salvation.

81-83. In sorrow the pious heart yearns for the comforts of God's promises (Psalm 73. 26; 84. 2). 82. **mine eyes fail for thy word**—*i.e.*, with yearning desire for thy word. When the eyes fail, yet faith must not. 83. **bottle in the smoke**—as a skin bottle dried and shrivelled up, in smoke, so is he withered by sorrow. Wine bottles of skin used to be hung up in smoke to dry them, before the wine was put in them. [MAURER.] 84-87. The shortness of my life requires that the relief afforded to me from mine enemies should be speedy. 85. **pits**—plots for my destruction. **which**—rather, "who," *i.e.*, *the proud*: "pits" is not the antecedent. 87. **consumed me upon earth**—HENGSTENBERG translates, "in the land;" understanding "me" of the nation Israel, of which but a small remnant was left. But *English Version* is simpler; either "They have consumed me so as to leave almost nothing of me on earth;" or, "They have almost destroyed and prostrated me on earth." [MAURER.] 87. **I forsook not**—Whatever else I am forsaken of, I forsake not thy precepts, and so I am not forsaken of thee (Psalm 39. 5, 13; 2 Corinthians, 4. 8, 9), and the injuries and insults of the wicked increase the need for it. But, however, they act regardless of God's law, the pious, adhering to its teaching, receive quickening grace, and are sustained steadfast.

89-91. In all changes God's word remains firm (1 Peter, 1. 25). Like

the heavens, it continually attests God's unchanging power and unchanging care (Psalm 89. 2). **is settled in**—*i.e.*, stands as firmly as the heaven in which it dwells, and whence it emanated. 90. (Psalm 33. 9). 91. **they**—The heavens (*v.* 89) and the earth (*v.* 90). HENSTENBERG translates, "They stand *for thy judgments*," *i.e.*, ready as obedient servants, to execute them. The usages of this Psalm favours this view. But see Jeremiah, 33. 25. 92-94. Hence the pious are encouraged and inclined to seek a knowledge of it, and persevere amidst the efforts of those planning and *waiting* to destroy him. 92. **my delights**—*plural*, not merely *delight*, but equal to all other delights. 93. The bounds of created perfection may be defined, but those of God's law in its nature, application, and influence, are infinite. There is no human thing so perfect, but that something is wanting to it; its limits are narrow, whereas God's law is of infinite breadth, reaching to all cases, perfectly meeting what each requires, and to all times (Psalm 19. 3, 6, 7-11; Ecclesiastics, 3. 11). It cannot be cramped with any definitions of man's dogmatical system. Man never outgrows the word. It does not shock the ignorant man with declared anticipations of discoveries which he had not yet made; whilst in it the man of science finds his newest discoveries by tacit anticipation provided for.

97. This characteristic love for God's law (cf. Psalm 1. 2) insures increase, 98-100, of knowledge, both of the matter of all useful, moral truth, and an experience of its application. 98. **wiser than mine enemies**—with all their carnal cunning (Deuteronomy, 4. 6, 8). **They are ever with me**—The *Hebrew* is, rather, *singular*, "it is ever with me," the commandments forming *ONE complete whole*, thy law. 100. **more than the ancients**—antiquity is no help against stupidity, where it does not accord with God's word [LUTHER] (Job. 32. 7-9). The Bible is the key of all knowledge, the history of the world, past, present, and to come (Psalm 111. 10). He who does the will of God shall know of the doctrine (John, 7. 17). **understanding**—is practical skill (Psalm 2. 10; 32. 8). 101-104. Avoidance of sinful courses is both the effect and means of increasing in divine knowledge (cf. Psalm 19. 10).

105. Not only does the word of God inform us of His will, but, as a light on a path in darkness, shows us how to follow the right and avoid the wrong way. The lamp of the word is not the sun. He would blind our eyes in our present fallen state; but we may bless God for the light shining as in a dark place, to guide us until the Sun of Righteousness shall come, and we shall be made capable of seeing Him (2 Peter, 1. 19; Revelation, 22. 4). The lamp is fed with the oil of the spirit. The allusion is to the lamps and torches carried at night before an Eastern caravan. 106-108. Such was the national covenant at Sinai and in the field of Moab. 108. **free-will offerings**—the spontaneous expressions of gratitude, as contrasted with the *appointed* "offerings" of the temple (Hosea, 14. 2; Hebrews, 13. 15). He determines to pursue this way, relying on God's quickening power (*v.* 50) in affliction, and a gracious acceptance of his "spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise" (Psalm 50. 5, 14, 23). 109, 110. In the midst of deadly perils (the phrase is drawn from the fact that what we carry in our hands may easily slip from them, Judges, 12. 3; 1 Samuel, 28. 21; Job, 13. 14; cf. 1 Samuel, 19. 5, and exposed to crafty enemies, his safety and guidance



is in the truth and promises of God. III, 112. These he joyfully takes as his perpetual heritage, to perform the duties and receive the comforts they teach, evermore.

**113. vain thoughts** — better, unstable persons, *lit.*, *divided men*, those of a *divided*, doubting mind (James, 1. 8, "a double minded man," [HENGSTENBERG], sceptics, or, sceptical notions as opposed to the certainty of God's word. 114. **hiding place** — (cf. Psalm 27. 5). **shield** — (Psalm 3. 3; 7. 10). **hope in thy word** — confidently rest on its teachings and promises. 115-117. Hence he fears not wicked men, nor dreads disappointment, sustained by God in making His law the rule of life. **Depart from me** — Ye can do nothing with me; *for*, etc. (Psalm 6. 8). 118-120. But the disobedient and rebellious will be visited by God's wrath, which impresses the pious with wholesome fear and awe. **their deceit is falsehood** — *i.e.*, all their cunning deceit, wherewith they seek to entrap the godly, *is in vain*. 120. The "judgments" are those on the wicked (*v.* 119). Joyful hope goes hand in hand with fear (Habakkuk, 3. 16-18).

**121-126.** On the grounds of his integrity, desire for God's word, and covenant relation to Him, the servant of God may plead, for His protecting care against the wicked, gracious guidance to the knowledge of truth, and His effective vindication of the righteous and their cause, which is also His own. **Be surety** — Stand for me against my oppressors (Genesis, 43. 9; Isaiah, 38. 14). 127. 128. **Therefore** [*i.e.*, In view of these benefits, or, Because of the glory of thy law, so much praised in the previous parts of the Psalm] **I love, etc.** [and] **Therefore** (repeated) — All its precepts, on all subjects, are estimable for their purity, and lead one imbued with their spirit to hate all evil (Psalm 19. 10). The words of God admits of no eclecticism; its least title is perfect (Psalm 12. 6; Matthew, 5. 17-19).

**129. wonderful** — *lit.*, *wonders*, *i.e.*, of moral excellence. 130. **The entrance** — *lit.*, *opening*; God's words, like an open door, let in light, or knowledge. Rather, as HENGSTENBERG explains it, "*The opening up*," or "*explanation of thy word.*" To the natural man the doors of God's word are shut. Luke, 24. 27, 31; Acts, 17. 3; Ephesians, 1. 18, confirms this view, "*Opening (i.e., explaining) and alleging.*" etc. **unto the simple** — those needing or desiring it (cf. Psalm 19. 7). 131-135. An ardent desire (cf. Psalm 56. 1, 2) for spiritual enlightening, establishment in a right course, deliverance from the wicked, and evidence of God's favour is expressed. **I opened my mouth, and panted** — as a traveller in a hot desert pants for the cooling breeze (Psalm 63. 1; 84. 2). **Look . . . upon me** — opposed to hiding or averting the face (cf. Psalm 25. 15; 86. 6; 102. 17). **as thou usest to do** — or, "as it is *right* to the manifestations of God's grace, resting on the nature of God as faithful to his promises to such, not on their own merits. **Order my steps** — *Make firm*, so that there be no halting (Psalm 40. 2). **any iniquity** — *v.* 34 favours HENGSTENBERG, "any iniquitous man," any "oppressor." But the parallel first clause in this (*v.* 33), favours *English Version* (Psalm 19. 13). His hope of deliverance from *external* oppression of man (*v.* 34) is founded on his deliverance from the *internal* "dominion of iniquity," in answer to his prayer (*v.* 33). 136. **Zealous himself to keep God's law**, he is deeply afflicted when others violate it

(cf. *v.* 53). *Lit.*, *Mine eyes come down* (dissolved) *like water brooks* (Lamentations, 3. 48; Jeremiah, 9. 1). **because, etc.**—(cf. Ezekiel, 9. 4; Jeremiah, 13. 17).

**137-139.** God's Justice and faithfulness in His government aggravate the neglect of the wicked, and more excite the lively zeal of His people. 139. (Psalm 69. 9). 140. **very pure**—*lit.*, *refined*, shown pure by trial. 141. The pious, however despised of men, are distinguished in God's sight by a regard for His law. 142-144. The principles of God's government are permanent and reliable, and in the deepest distress His people find them a theme of delightful meditation and a source of reviving power (*v.* 17, 116). **everlasting**—(Psalm 111. 3), though to outward appearance seeming dead. **law is truth**—it therefore cannot deceive as to its promises.

**145-149.** An intelligent devotion is led by divine promises, and is directed to an increase of gracious affections, arising from a contemplation of revealed truth. **prevented**—*lit.*, *came before*, anticipated, not only the *dawn*, but even the usual periods of *the night*; when the night watches, which might be expected to find me asleep, come, they find me awake (Psalm 63-6; 77. 4; Lamentations, 2. 19). Such is the earnestness of the desire and love for God's truth. **quicken me**—revive my heart according to those principles of justice, founded on thine own nature, and revealed in thy law, which specially set forth thy mercy to the humble as well as justice to the wicked (cf. *v.* 30). 150-152. Though the wicked are *near* to injure, because *far* from God's law, He is *near* to help, and faithful to his word, which abides for ever.

**153-155.** Though the remembering of God's law is not meritorious, yet it evinces a filial emper, and provides the pious with promises to plead, while the wicked, in neglecting His law, reject God and dispise His promises (cf. Psalm 9. 13; 43. 1; 69. 18). **plead, etc.**—HENGSTENBERG *translates*, "Fight my fight." (See Psalm 35. 1; 43. 1; Micah, 7. 9). 156. (Cf. *v.* 149). 157. (Cf. *v.* 86, 87, 95). 158. (Cf. *v.* 136). **transgressors**—or, *lit.*, *traitors*, who are faithless to a righteous sovereign, and side with His enemies (cf. Psalm 25. 3, 8). 159. (Cf. *v.* 121-126; 153-155). **quicken, etc.**—(*v.* 88). This prayer occurs here for the ninth time, showing a deep sense of frailty. 160. God has been ever faithful, and the principles of His government will ever continue worthy of confidence. **from the beginning**—*i.e.*, "every word *from Genesis* (called by the Jews from its first words, 'In the beginning') to the end of the Scriptures in true." HENGSTENBERG *translates* more *lit.*, "The *sum* of thy words is truth." The sense is substantially the same. The whole body of revelation is truth. "Thy word is nothing but truth." [LUTHER.]

**161-165.** (Cf. *v.* 46, 86). 161. **awe**—reverential, not slavish fear, which could not co-exist with love (*v.* 163; 1 John, 4. 8). Instead of fearing his persecutors, he fears God's word alone (Luke, 12. 4, 5). The Jews inscribed in the first page of the great Bible (Genesis, 28), "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" 162. (Cf. Matthew, 13. 44, 45). Though persecuted by the mighty, the pious are not turned from revering God's authority to seek their favour, but rejoice in the possession of this "pearl of great price," as great victors in spoils. Hating falsehood and loving

truth, often, every day, praising God for it, they find peace and freedom from temptation. 163. **lying** — *i.e.*, as in *v.* 29, unfaithfulness to the covenant of God with His people; apostasy. **nothing shall offend them** — or, *cause them* to offend (*cf. Margin*). 166-168. As they keep God's law from motives of love for it, and are free from slavish fear, they are ready to subject their lives to His inspection. 168. **all my ways are before thee** — I wish to order my ways as before thee, rather than in reference to man (Genesis, 17. 1; Psalm 73. 23). All men's ways are under God's eye (Proverbs, 5. 21); the godly alone realise the fact and live accordingly.

169-170. The prayer for *understanding* of the truth precedes that for *deliverance*. The fulfilment of the first is the basis of the fulfilment of the second (Psalm 90. 11-17). On the terms "cry" and "supplication" (*cf. Psalm 6. 9; 17. 1*). 171, 172. **shall utter** — or, *pour* out praise (*cf. Psalm 19. 2*); shall cause thy praise to stream forth as from a bubbling, overflowing fountain. **my tongue shall speak thy word** — *lit., answer thy word, i.e., with praise, respond to thy word*. Every expression in which we praise God and His word is a response, acknowledgment, corresponding to the perfections of Him whom we praise. 173, 174. (*Cf. v. 77, 81, 92*). **I have chosen** — in preference to all other objects of delight. 175. Save me that I may praise thee. **thy judgments** — as *v. 149, 156*. 176. Though a wanderer from God, the truly pious ever desires to be drawn back to Him, and, though for a time negligent of duty, never forgets the commandments by which it is taught. **lost** — therefore utterly helpless as to recovering itself (Jeremiah, 50. 6; Luke, 15. 4). Not only the sinner before conversion, but the believer after conversion, is unable to recover himself; but the latter, after temporary wandering, knows to whom to look for restoration. These last two verses seem to sum up the petitions, confessions, and professions of the Psalm. The writer desires God's favour, that he may praise Him for His truth, confesses that he has erred, but, in the midst of all his wanderings and adversities, professes an abiding attachment to the revealed word of God, the theme of such repeated eulogies, and the recognised source of such great and unnumbered blessings. Thus the Psalm, though more than usually didactic, is made the medium of both parts of devotion — prayer and praise.

## PSALM CXX.

**Ver. 1-7.** This is the first of fifteen Psalms, (120-134), entitled, "A Song of degrees" (121st — *lit., A Song for the degrees*), or, *ascents*. It seems most probable they were designed for the use of people, when *going up* (*cf. 1 Kings, 12. 27, 28*) to Jerusalem on the festival occasions (Deuteronomy, 16. 16), three times a-year. David appears as the author of four, Solomon of one (127), and the other ten are anonymous, probably composed after the captivity. In this Psalm the writer acknowledges God's mercy, prays for relief from a malicious foe, whose punishment he anticipates, and then repeats his complaint.

**2, 3.** Slander and deceit charged on his foes implies his innocence. **tongue** — as Psalm 52. 2, 4. **4. coals of juniper** — which retain heat

long. **sharp arrows of the mighty** — Destructive inflictions. This verse may be read as a description of the wicked; but better as their punishment, in reply to the question of *v.* 3, 5. A residence in these remote lands pictures his miserable condition. 6, 7. While those who surrounded him were maliciously hostile, he was disposed to peace. This Psalm may well begin such a series as this, as a contrast to the promised joys of God's worship.

## PSALM CXXI.

**Ver. 1-8.** God's guardian care of His people celebrated.

1. *To lift up the eyes* expresses desire (cf. Psalm 25. 1), mingled with expectation. The last clause, read as a question, is answered, 2., by avowing God to be the helper, of whose ability His creative power is a pledge (Psalm 115. 15), to which, 3, 4, His sleepless vigilance is added. **to be moved** — (cf. Psalm 38. 16; 66. 9). 5. **upon thy right hand** — a protector's place (Psalm 109. 31; 110. 5). 6-8. God keeps His people at all times and in all perils. **nor the moon by night** — poetically represents the dangers of the night, over which the moon presides (Genesis, 1. 16). **thy going out, etc.** — All thy ways (Deuteronomy, 28. 19; Psalm 104. 23). **evermore** — includes a future state

## PSALM CXXII.

**Ver. 1-8.** This Psalm might well express the sacred joy of the pilgrims on entering the holy city, where praise, as the religious as well as civil metropolis, is celebrated, and for whose prosperity, as representing the Church, prayer is offered.

1, 2. **our feet shall stand** — *lit., are standing.* **gates** — (cf. Psalm 9. 14; 87. 2). 3-5. **compact together** — All parts united, as in David's time. **testimony** — If *unto* is supplied, this may denote the ark (Exodus, 25. 10-21); otherwise the *act of going* is denoted, called a *testimony* in allusion to the requisition (Deuteronomy, 16. 16), with which it was a compliance. **there are set thrones** — or, *do sit, thrones* used for the occupants, David's sons (2 Samuel, 8. 18). 6, 7. Let peace, including prosperity, every where prevail. 8, 9. In the welfare of the city, as its civil, and especially the religious relations was involved that of Israel. **now** — as Psalm 115. 2. Let me say — **house of... God** — in wider sense, the Church, whose welfare would be promoted by the good of Jerusalem.

## PSALM CXXIII.

**Ver. 1-4.** An earnest and expecting prayer for divine aid in distress.

1. (Cf. Psalm 121. 1). **thou that dwellest** — *lit., sittest as enthroned* (cf. Psalm 2. 4; 113. 4, 5). 2. Deference, submission, and trust, are all expressed by the figure. In the East, servants in attending on their masters are almost wholly directed by *signs*, which require the closest observance of the hands of the latter. The servants of God should

look (1.) to His directing hand, to appoint them their work; (2.) to His supplying hand (Psalm 104. 28), to give them their portion in due season; (3.) to His protecting hand, to right them when wronged; (4.) to His correcting hand (Isaiah, 9. 13; 1 Peter, 5. 6; cf. Genesis, 16. 6); (5) to His rewarding hand. 3. *The contempt* was that of the heathen, and, perhaps, Samaritans (Nehemiah, 1. 3; 2. 19). 4. **of those that are at ease** — self-complacently, disregarding God's law, and despising His people.

## PSALM CXXIV.

**Ver. 1-8.** The writer, for the Church, praises God for past, and expresses trust for future, deliverance from foes

1, 2. **on our side** — for us (Psalm 56. 9). **now** — or, *oh! let Israel, etc. rose . . . against, etc.* — (Psalm 8. 1; 56. 11). **then** — *i.e.*, the time of our danger. **quick** — *lit., living* (Numbers, 16. 32, 33), description of ferocity. 4, 5. (Cf. Psalm 18. 4, 16). The epithet *proud* added to *waters* denotes insolent enemies. 6, 7. The figure is changed to that of a rapacious wild beast (Psalm 3. 7), and then of a fowler (Psalm 91. 3), and complete escape is denoted by breaking the net. 8. (Cf. Psalm 121. 2). **name** — in the usual sense (Psalm 5. 11; 20. 1). He thus places over against the great danger the omnipotent God, and drowns, as it were in an anthem, the wickedness of the whole world and of hell, just as a great fire consumes a little drop of water. [LUTHER.]

## PSALM CXXV.

**Ver. 1-5.** God honours the confidence of His people, by protection and deliverance, and leaves hypocrites to the doom of the wicked.

1, 2. **mount Zion** — as an emblem of permanence, and the locality of Jerusalem as one of security, represented the firm and protected condition of God's people (cf. Psalm 46. 5), supported not only by providence, but by covenant promise. Even the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but God's kindness shall not depart, nor His covenant of peace be removed (Isaiah, 54. 10). **they that trust** — (*v.* 1), are "His people" (*v.* 2). 3. *Though* God may leave them for a time under the *rod*, or *power* (Psalm 2. 9), and oppression of the wicked for a time, as a chastisement, He will not suffer them to be tempted so as to fall into sin (1 Corinthians, 10. 13). The wicked shall only prove a correcting rod to them, not a destroying sword; even this rod shall not *remain* ("rest") on them, lest they be tempted to despair and apostasy (Psalm 73. 13, 14). God may even try His people to the uttermost: when nothing is before our eyes but pure despair, then He delivers us and gives life in death, and makes us blessed in the curse (2 Corinthians, 1. 8, 9). [LUTHER.] **the lot** — the possession, *lit., Canaan*, spiritually, the heavenly inheritance of holiness and bliss which is appointed to the righteous. Sin's dominion shall not *permanently* come between the believer and his inheritance. 4. (Cf. Psalm 7. 10; 84. 11). 5. Those who turn aside (under temptation) permanently show that they are hypocrites, and their lot or portion shall be with

the wicked (Psalm 28. 3). **crooked ways**— (cf. Deuteronomy, 9. 16; Malachi, 2. 8, 9). "Theirs" is emphatic; the "crooked ways" proceed from *their own* hearts. The true Israel is here distinguished from the false. Scripture everywhere opposes the Jewish delusion that mere outward descent would save (Romans, 2. 28, 29; 9. 6, 7; Galatians, 6. 16). The byeways of sin from the way of life.

## PSALM CXXVI.

**Ver. 1-6.** To praise for God's favour to His people is added a prayer for its continued manifestation.

**1-3.** The joy of those returned from Babylon was ecstatic, and elicited the admiration even of the heathen, as illustrating God's great power and goodness. **turned again the captivity** — *i.e.*, restored from it (Job, 39. 12; Psalm 14. 7; Proverbs, 12. 14). HENGSTENBERG translates, "When the Lord turned Himself to the turning of Zion" (see *Margin*). God returns to His people when they return to Him (Deuteronomy, 30. 2, 3). **4.** All did not return at once; hence the prayer for repeated favours. **as the streams in the south** — or, the torrents in the deserts south of Judea, dependent on rain (Joshua, 15. 19), reappearing after dry seasons (cf. Job, 6. 15; Psalm 68. 9). The point of comparison is joy at the reappearing of what has been so painfully missed. **5, 6.** As in husbandry, the sower may cast his seed in a dry and parched soil, with desponding fears, so those shall reap abundant fruit who toil in tears with the prayer of faith. Cf. the history (Ezra, 6. 16, 22). **he that goeth forth** — *lit.*, better, "He goes, he comes — he comes," etc. The repetition implies there is no end of weeping here, as there shall be no end of joy hereafter (Isaiah, 35. 10), **precious seed** — rather, *seed to be drawn* from the seed box for sowing, *lit.*, seed-draught. Cf. on this Psalm, Jeremiah, 31. 9, etc.

## PSALM CXXVII.

**Ver. 1-5.** The theme of this Psalm, *that human enterprises only succeed by the divine blessing*, was probably associated with the building of the temple by Solomon, its author. It may have been adopted in this view, as suited to this series especially, as appropriately expressing the sentiments of God's worshippers in relation to the erection of the second temple.

**1, 2.** suggest the view of the theme given. **so he giveth his beloved sleep** — *i.e.*, His providential care gives sleep which no efforts of ours can otherwise procure, and this is a reason for trust as to other things (Cf. Matthew, 6. 26-32). **3-5.** Posterity is often represented as a blessing from God (Genesis, 30. 2, 18; 1 Samuel, 1. 19, 20). Children are represented as the defenders (*arrows*) of their parents in war, and in litigation. *Adversaries in the gate*, or place of public business (cf. Job, 5. 4; Psalm 69. 12).

## PSALM CXXVIII.

**Ver. 1-6.** The temporal blessings of true piety. The 8th ch. of Zechariah is a virtual commentary on this Psalm. Cf. *v.* 3, with Zechariah, 8. 5; and *v.* 2, with Leviticus, 26. 16; Deuteronomy, 28. 33; Zechariah, 8. 10; and *v.* 6, with Zechariah, 8. 4.

1. (Cf. Psalm 1. 1), 2. **for thou shalt eat**—*i.e.*, It is a blessing to live on the fruits of one's own industry. 3. **by the sides**—or, within (Psalm 48. 2) **olive plants**—are peculiarly luxuriant (Psalm 52. 8), 5. In temporal blessings the pious do not forget the richer blessings of God's grace, which they shall ever enjoy. 6. Long life crowns all other temporal favours. As Psalm 125. 5, this Psalm closes with a prayer for peace, with prosperity for God's people.

## PSALM CXXIX.

**Ver. 1-8.** The people of God, often delivered from enemies, are confident of His favour, by their overthrow in future.

1, 2. **may Israel now say**—or, oh! let Israel say (Psalm 124. 1). Israel's youth was the sojourn in Egypt (Jeremiah, 2. 2; Hosea, 2. 15). **prevailed**—*lit.*, *been able, i.e.*, to accomplish their purpose against me (Psalm 13. 4). 3, 4. The *ploughing* is a figure of scourging, which most severe physical infliction aptly represents all kinds. **the cords**—*i.e.*, which fasten the plough to the ox; and *cutting*, this denotes God's arresting the persecution. 5, 6. The ill-rooted roof grass, which withers before it grows up, and procures for those gathering it no harvest blessing (Ruth, 2. 4), sets forth the utter uselessness, and the rejection of the wicked.

## PSALM CXXX.

**Ver. 1-8.** The penitent sinner's hope is in God's mercy only.

1, 2. **depths**—for great distress (Psalm 40. 2; 69. 3). 3. **shouldest mark**—or, take strict account (Job, 10. 14; 14. 16), implying a confession of the existence of sin. **who shall stand**—(Psalm 1. 6). *Standing* is opposed to the guilty sinking down in fear and self-condemnation (Malachi, 3. 2; Revelation, 5. 15, 16). The question implies a negative, which is thus more strongly stated. 4. Pardon produces filial fear and love. Judgment without the hope of pardon creates fear and dislike. The sense of forgiveness, so far from producing licentiousness, produces holiness (Jeremiah, 33. 9; Ezekiel, 16. 62, 63; 1 Peter, 2. 16). "There is forgiveness with thee, not that thou mayest be presumed upon, but feared." **wait for the Lord**—in expectation (Psalm 27. 14). **watch for, etc.**—in earnestness and anxiety. 7, 8. **let Israel, etc.**—*i.e.*, All are invited to seek and share divine goodness. **from all his iniquities**—or, **punishments of them** (Psalm 40. 12, etc.).

## PSALM CXXXI.

**Ver. 1-3.** This Psalm, while expressive of David's pious feelings on assuming the royal office, teaches the humble submissive temper of a true child of God.

**1. eyes lofty** — a sign of pride (Psalm 18. 27). **exercise myself** — *lit.*, walk in, or meddle with. **3. surely, etc.** — the form is that of an oath, or strongest assertion. Submission is denoted by the figure of a weaned child. As a child weaned by his mother from the breast, so I still the motions of pride in me (Matthew, 18. 3, 4; Isaiah, 11. 8; 28. 9). Hebrew children were often not weaned till three years old. *Soul* may be taken for desire, which gives a more definite sense, though one included in the idea conveyed by the usual meaning, *myself*.

## PSALM CXXXII.

**Ver. 1-18.** The writer, perhaps Solomon (cf. *v.* 8, 9), after relating David's pious zeal for God's service, pleads for the fulfilment of the promise (2 Samuel, 7. 16), which, providing for a perpetuation of David's kingdom, involved that of God's right worship and the establishment of the greater and spiritual kingdom of David's greater Son. Of Him and His kingdom both the temple and its worship, and the kings and kingdom of Judah, were types. The congruity of such a topic, with the tenor of this series of Psalms, is obvious.

**1-5.** This vow is not elsewhere recorded. It expresses, in strong language, David's intense desire to see the establishment of God's worship as well as of His kingdom. **remember David** — *lit.*, remember for David, *i.e.*, all his troubles and anxieties on the matter. **habitation** — *lit.*, dwellings, generally used to denote the sanctuary. **6.** These may be the "words of David" and his pious friends, who, at Ephratah, or Bethlehem (Genesis, 48. 7), where he once lived, may have heard of the ark, which he found for the first time, in the **fields of the wood** — or, *Jair*, or *Kirjath-jearim* (City of woods) (1 Samuel, 7. 1; 2 Samuel, 6. 3, 4), whence it was brought to Zion. **7.** The purpose of engaging in God's worship is avowed. **8, 9.** The solemn entry of the ark, symbolical of God's presence and power, with the attending priests, into the sanctuary, is proclaimed in the words used by Solomon (2 Chronicles, 6. 41). **10-12.** **For thy servant David's sake** [*i.e.*, On account of the promise made to him] **turn . . . anointed** — Repulse not him who, as David's descendant, pleads the promise to perpetuate his royal line. After reciting the promise, substantially from 2 Samuel, 7. 12-16 (cf. Acts, 2. 30, etc.), an additional plea, **13,** is made on the ground of God's choice of Zion (here used for Jerusalem) as His dwelling, inasmuch as the prosperity of the kingdom was connected with that of the Church (Psalm 122. 8, 9). **14-18.** That choice is expressed in God's words, *I will sit or dwell*, or sit enthroned. The joy of the people springs from the blessings of His grace, conferred through the medium of the priesthood. **make the horn . . . to bud** — enlarge his power. **a lamp** — the figure of prosperity (Psalm 18. 10, 28; 89. 17). **With the**



confounding of his enemies is united his prosperity and the unceasing splendour of his crown.

## PSALM CXXXIII.

**Ver. 1-3.** The blessings of fraternal unity.

**1, 2.** As the fragrant oil is refreshing, so this affords delight. The holy anointing oil for the high priest was olive oil mixed with four of the best spices (Exodus, 30. 22, 25, 30). Its rich profusion typified the abundance of the Spirit's graces. As the copious dew, such as fell on *Hermon*, falls in fertilising power on the mountains of Zion, so this unity is fruitful in good works. **3. there**—*i.e.*, in Zion, the Church; the material Zion, blessed with enriching dews, suggests this allusion to the source of the influence enjoyed by the spiritual Zion. **commanded the blessing**—(cf. Psalm 68. 28).

## PSALM CXXXIV.

**Ver. 1-3.** **1, 2.** The pilgrim-bands arriving at the sanctuary call on the priests, who *stand in the house of the Lord* at the time of the evening sacrifice, to unite in praising God in their name and that of the people, using appropriate gesture, to which the priests reply, pronouncing the Mosaic blessing which they alone could pronounce. A fit epilogue to the whole pilgrim-book, Psalms 120-134. **3.** After the manner directed (Numbers, 6. 23). **by night**—the *evening* service (Psalm 141. 2), as opposed to *morning* (Psalm 92. 2). **lift up your hands**—(cf. Psalm 28. 2). **out of Zion**—the Church, as His residence, and thus seat of blessings. Thus closes the songs of degrees.

## PSALM CXXXV.

**Ver. 1-21.** A Psalm of praise, in which God's relations to His Church, His power in the natural world, and in delivering his people, are contrasted with the vanity of idols and idol worship.

**1-3.** In the general call for praise, the priests, *that stand in the house of the Lord*, are specially mentioned. **4-7.** God's choice of Israel is the first reason assigned for rendering praise; the next, His manifested greatness in creation and providence. **heaven, and . . . seas, and all . . . ends of the earth**—denote universality. **8, 9.** The last plague is cited to illustrate His "tokens and wonders." **10-12.** The conquest of Canaan was by God's power, not that of the people. **heritage**—or, possession. **13. name [and] memorial**—Each denote that by which God is made known. **14. will judge**—do justice (Psalm 72. 2). **repent himself**—change his dealings (Psalm 90. 13). **15-18.** (Cf. Psalm 115. 4-8). **are like unto them**—or, shall be like, etc. Idolaters become spiritually stupid, and perish with their idols (Isaiah, 1. 31). **19-21.** (Cf. Psalm 115. 9-11). There we have *trust* for *bless* here. **out of Zion**—(cf. Psalm 110. 2; 134. 3). From the Church, as a centre, His praise is diffused throughout the earth.

## PSALM CXXXVI.

**Ver. 1-26.** The theme is the same as that of 135th. God should be praised for His works of creation and providence, his deliverance and care of his people, and judgments on their enemies, and His goodness to all. The chorus to every verse is in the terms of that of Psalm 106. 1; 118. 1-4, and was perhaps used at the *Amen* by the people, in worship (cf. 1 Chronicles, 16. 36; Psalm 105. 45).

1-3. The divine title denotes supremacy. 4. **alone** — excluding all help. 5, 6. **by** [or, in] **wisdom** — (Psalm 104. 24). **made** — *lit.*, *maker of*. **above** [or, higher than] **the waters** — (Psalm 24. 2). 12. Cf. similar expressions (Exodus, 3. 20; Deuteronomy, 4. 34, etc.). 15. **overthrew** — *lit.*, *shook off*, as Exodus, 14. 27, as a contemptuous rejection of a reptile. 23. **remembered us** — or, for us (Psalm 132. 1). **our low estate** — *i.e.*, captivity. 24. **and hath redeemed** [or *lit.*, *snatched*] **us** — alluding to the sudden deliverance effected by the overthrow of Babylon. 25. To the special favours to His people is added the record of God's goodness to all His creatures (cf. Matthew, 6. 30). 26. **God of heaven** — occurs but once (Jonah, 1. 9) before the captivity. It is used by the later writers as specially distinguishing God from idols.

## PSALM CXXXVII.

**Ver. 1-9.** This Psalm records the mourning of the captive Israelites. and a prayer and prediction respecting the destruction of their enemies.

1. **rivers of Babylon** — The name of the city used for the whole country. **remembered Zion** — or, Jerusalem, as Psalm 132. 13. 2. **upon the willows** — which may have grown there then, if not now; as the palm, which was once common, is now rare in Palestine. 3, 4. Whether the request was in curiosity or derision, the answer intimates that a compliance was incongruous with their mournful feelings (Proverbs, 25. 20). 5, 6. For joyful songs would imply forgetfulness of their desolated homes and fallen Church. The solemn imprecations on the "*hand*" and "*tongue*," if thus forgetful, relate to the cunning or skill in playing, and the power of singing. 7-9. **remember . . the children of Edom** — (cf. Psalm 132. 1). *i.e.*, to punish. **the day of Jerusalem** — its downfall. (Lamentations, 4. 21, 22; Obadiah, 11-13). **daughter of Babylon** — the people (Psalm 9. 13). Their destruction had been abundantly foretold (Isaiah, 13. 14; Jeremiah, 51. 23). For the terrible-ness of that destruction, God's righteous judgment, and not the passions of the chafed Israelites, was responsible.

## PSALM CXXXVIII.

**Ver. 1-8.** David thanks God for His benefits, and anticipating a wider extension of God's glory, by His means, assures himself of His continued presence and faithfulness.

1. (Cf. Psalm 9. 1). **before the gods** — whether *angels* (Psalm 8. 5);

or *princes* (Exodus, 21. 6; Psalm 82. 6); or *idols* (Psalm 97. 7); denotes a readiness to worship the true God alone, and a contempt of all other objects of worship. 2. (Cf. Psalm 5. 7). **thy word above all thy name** — *i.e.*, God's promise (2 Samuel, 7.), sustained by His mercy and truth, exceeded all other manifestations of Himself as subject to praise. 3-5. That promise, as an answer to his prayers in distress, revived and strengthened his faith, and, as the basis of other revelations of the Messiah, will be the occasion of praise by all who hear and receive it (Psalm 68. 29, 31; Isaiah, 4. 3). **for great (is) the glory** — or, when the glory shall be great, in God's fulfilling His purposes of redemption. 6, 7. On this general principle of God's government (Isaiah, 2. 11; 57. 15; 66. 2). he relies for God's favour in saving him, and overthrowing his enemies. **knoweth afar off** — their ways and deserts (Psalm 1. 6). 8. God will fulfil His promise.

## PSALM CXXXIX.

**Ver. 1-24.** After presenting the sublime doctrines of God's omnipresence, the Psalmist appeals to Him, avowing his innocence, his abhorrence of the wicked, and his ready submission to the closest scrutiny. Admonition to the wicked and comfort to the pious are alike implied inferences from these doctrines.

## PSALM CXL.

**Ver. 1-13.** The style of this Psalm resembles those of David in the former part of the book, presenting the usual complaint, prayer, and confident hope of relief.

**I. evil man** — which of David's enemies is meant is not important. 2-5. This character of the wicked, and the devices planned against the pious, correspond to Psalm 10. 7; 31. 13; 58. 4, etc. **sharpened... like a serpent** — not like a serpent does, but they are thus like a serpent in cunning and venom. **snare [and] net** — for threatening dangers (cf. Psalm 38. 12; 57. 6). 6. (Cf. Psalm 5. 1-12; 16. 2). 7. **day of battle** — *lit.*, of armour, *i.e.*, when using it. 8. (Cf. Psalm 37. 12; 66. 7). **lest they exalt themselves** — or, they will be exalted if permitted to prosper. 9. contrasts his head covered by God, (*v.* 7), with theirs, or (as head may be used for persons) with them, covered with the results of their wicked deeds (Psalm 7. 16). 10. (Cf. Psalm 11. 6. 120 1). *To cast into fire and deep pits*, figures for utter destruction. 11. **an evil speaker** — or, slanderer, will not be tolerated (Psalm 101. 7). The last clause may be translated: "*an evil (man) He (God) shalt hurt,*" etc. 12 (Cf. Psalm 9. 4). 13. After all changes, the righteous shall have cause for praise. Such *shall dwell*, or sit securely under God's protection (Psalm 21. 6; 41. 12).

## PSALM CXLI.

**Ver. 1-10.** This Psalm evinces its authorship as the preceding, by its structure and the character of its contents. It is a prayer for deliverance from sins to which affliction tempted him, and from the enemies who caused it.

## PSALM CXLII.

**Ver. 1-7.** *Maschil* — (cf. Psalm 32. title). *When he was in the cave*, either of Adullam (1 Samuel, 22. 1), or En-gedi (1 Samuel, 24. 3). This does not mean that the Psalm was composed *in the cave*, but that the precarious mode of life, of which his refuge in caves was a striking illustration, occasioned the complaint, which constitutes the first part of the Psalm, and furnishes the reason for the prayer with which it concludes, and which, as the prominent characteristic, gives its name.

**1. with my voice** — audibly, because earnestly. **2.** (Cf. Psalm 62. 8). **complaint** — or, a sad musing. **3. thou knewest . . . path** — the appeal is indicative of conscious innocence; knewest it to be right, and that my affliction is owing to the snares of enemies, and is not deserved (cf. Psalm 42. 4; 61. 2). **4.** Utter desolation is meant. **right hand** — the place of a protector (Psalm 110. 5). **cared for** — *lit.*, *sought after*, to do good. **5.** (Cf. Psalm 31. 14; 62. 7). **6.** (Cf. Psalm 17. 1). **7.** (Cf. Psalm 25. 17). **that I may praise** — *lit.*, *for praising*, or that thy name may be praised, *i.e.*, by the righteous who shall surround me with sympathising joy (Psalm 34. 27).

## PSALM CXLIII.

**Ver. 1-12.** In structure and style, like the preceding (Psalms 140-142.), this Psalm is clearly evinced to be David's. It is a prayer for pardon, and for relief from enemies; afflictions, as usual, producing confession and penitence.

**1. in thy faithfulness . . . and . . . righteousness** — or God's regard to the claims which He has permitted His people to make in His covenant. **2. enter . . . judgment** — deal not in strict justice. **shall not . . . justified** — or, is no man justified, or innocent (Job, 14. 3; Romans, 3. 20). **3, 4.** The exciting reason for his prayer — his afflictions — led to confession as just made; he now makes the complaint. **as those that have been long dead** — deprived of life's comforts (cf. Psalm 40. 15; 88. 3-6). **5, 6.** The distress is aggravated by the contrast of former comfort (Psalm 22. 3-5), for whose return he longs. **a thirsty land** — which needs rain, as did his spirit God's gracious visits (Psalm 28. 1; 69. 17). **7. spirit faileth** — is exhausted. **8.** (Cf. Psalm 25. 1-4; 59. 16). **the way . . . walk** — *i.e.*, the way of safety and righteousness (Psalm 142. 3-6). **9.** (Cf. Psalm 31. 15-20). **10.** (Cf. Psalm 5. 8; 27. 11). **land of uprightness** — *lit.*, *an even land* (Psalm 26. 12). **11.** (Cf. Psalm 23. 3; 119. 156). **12.** God's mercy to his people is often wrath to His and their enemies (cf. Psalm 31. 17). **thy servant** — as chosen to be such, entitled to divine regard.

## PSALM CXLIV.

**Ver. 1-15.** David's praise of God as his all-sufficient help is enhanced by a recognition of the intrinsic worthlessness of man. Confidently imploring God's interposition against his enemies he breaks forth into praise and joyful anticipations of the prosperity of his kingdom, when freed from vain and wicked men.

## PSALM CXLV.

**Ver. 1-21.** A Psalm of praise to God for His mighty, righteous, and gracious government of all men, and of His humble and suffering people in particular.

**1, 2.** (Cf. Psalm 30. 1). **bless thy name** — celebrate thy perfections (Psalm 5. 11). God is addressed as king, alluding to His government of men. **3.** (Cf. Psalm 18. 3; 48. 1). **greatness** — as displayed in his works. **4. shall declare** — *lit.*, they shall declare, *i.e.*, all generations. **5. I will speak** — or, muse (Psalm 77. 12; 119. 15). **thy wondrous works** — or, words of thy wonders, *i.e.*, which describe them (Psalm 105. 27, *Margin*). **6. terrible acts** — which produce dread or fear. **7. memory** — (Psalm 6. 5), remembrance, or what causes to be remembered. **righteousness** — as Psalm 143. 1, goodness according to covenant engagement. **8, 9.** (Cf. Psalm 103. 8; 111. 4). **over all, etc.** — rests on all His works. **10. bless** — as *v.* 1, to praise with reverence, more than merely to praise. **11, 12.** The declaration of God's glory is for the extension of his knowledge and perfections in the world. **13.** (Cf. Daniel, 4. 3, 34). **14.** (Cf. Psalm 37. 17; 54. 4). **15, 16. eyes of . . . thee** — or, look with expecting faith (Psalm 104. 27, 28). **17. holy . . . works** — *lit.*, merciful or kind goodness (Psalm 144. 2) is the corresponding noun. **righteous** — in a similar relation of meaning to *righteousness* (*v.* 7). **18, 19.** (Cf. Psalm 34. 7 10). **20.** Those who fear him (*v.* 19) are those who are here said to love him. **21.** (Cf. Psalm 23. 21). **all flesh** — (Psalm 65. 2). The Psalm ends, as it began, with ascriptions of praise, in which the pious will ever delight to join.

## PSALM CXLVI.

**Ver. 1-10.** An exhortation to praise God, who, by the gracious and faithful exercise of His power in goodness to the needy, is alone worthy of implicit trust.

## PSALM CXLVII.

**Ver. 1-20.** This and the remaining Psalms have been represented as specially designed to celebrate the rebuilding of Jerusalem (cf. Nehemiah, 6. 16; 12. 27). They all open and close with the stirring call for praise. This specially declares God's providential care towards all creatures, and particularly His people.

1. (Cf. Psalm 92. 1; 135. 2). 2. (Cf. Psalm 107. 3; Isaiah, 11. 12). 3. Though applicable to the captive Israelites, this is a general and precious truth. **wounds**—(cf. *Margin*). 4, 5. God's power in nature (Isaiah, 40. 26-28, and often) is presented as a pledge of His power to help His people. **telleth...stars**—what no man can do (Genesis, 15. 5). 6. That power is put forth for the good of the meek and suffering pious, and confusion of the wicked (Psalm 146. 8, 9). 7-9. His providence supplies bountifully the wild animals in their mountain homes. **Sing...Lord**—*lit.*, *Answer the Lord, i.e.*, in grateful praise to His goodness, thus declared in His acts. 10, 11. The advantages afforded, as in war by the strength of the horse or the agility of man, do not incline God to favour any; but those who fear and, of course trust Him, will obtain his approbation and aid. 12-14. **Strengthened... gates**—or, means of defence against invaders. **maketh...borders**—or, territories (Genesis, 23. 17; Isaiah, 54. 12). **filleth thee, etc.**—(cf. *Margin*), 15-18. God's word as a swift messenger, executes His purpose, for with Him to command is to perform (Genesis, 1. 3; Psalm 33. 9), and He brings about the wonders of providence as easily as men cast crumbs. **morsels**—used as to food (Genesis, 18. 5), perhaps here denotes hail. 19-20. This mighty ruler and benefactor of heaven and earth is such especially to His chosen people, to whom alone (Deuteronomy, 4. 32-34) He has made known His will, while others have been left in darkness. Therefore unite in the great hallelujah.

## PSALM CXLVIII.

**Ver. 1-14.** The scope of this Psalm is the same as of the preceding.

1. **heavens** [and] **heights**—are synonymous. 2. **hosts**—(cf. Psalm 103. 21). 4. **heavens of heavens**—the very highest. **waters**—clouds, resting above the visible heavens (cf. Genesis, 1. 7). 5. **praise the name**—as representing His perfections. **he commanded**—He is emphatic, describing creation to God alone. 6. The perpetuity of the frame of nature is, of course, subject to Him who formed it. **a decree...pass**—His ordinances respecting them shall not change (Jeremiah, 36. 31), or perish (Job, 34. 20; Psalm 37. 36). 7-10. The call on the earth, as opposed to heaven, includes *seas* or *depths*, whose inhabitants, the dragon, as one of the largest (cf. on leviathan, Psalm 104. 26), is selected to represent. The most destructive and ungovernable agents of inanimate nature are introduced. **fulfilling his word**—or, law, may be understood of each. Next the most distinguished productions of the vegetable world. **fruitfull trees**—or, trees of fruit, as opposed to forest trees. Wild and domestic, large and small, animals are comprehended. 11, 12. Next all rational beings, from the highest in rank to little children. **princes**—or, military leaders. 13. **Let them**—all mentioned. **excellent**—or, exalted (Isaiah, 12. 4)) **his glory**—*majesty* (Psalm 45. 3). **above...heaven**—*their united splendours* fail to match His. 14. **exalteth the horn**—established power (Psalm 75. 5, 6). **praise of** [or *lit.*, *for his saints*—*i.e.*, occasions for them to praise Him. They are further described as His people, and near Him, **sustaining by covenanted** care a peculiarly intimate relation.

## PSALM CXLIX.

**Ver. 1-9.** This Psalm sustains a close connection with the foregoing. The chosen people are exhorted to praise God, in view of past favours, and also future victories over enemies, of which they are impliedly assured.

1. (Cf. Psalm 96. 1). 2. God had signalized His relation as a sovereign, in restoring them to their land. 3. **in the dance** — (Psalm 30. 11). The dance is connected with other terms, expressive of the great joy of the occasion. The word may be rendered *lute*, to which the other instruments are joined. **sing praises** — or, sing and play. 4. **taketh pleasure** — *lit., accepts*, alluding to acceptance of propitiatory offerings (cf. Psalm 7. 18). **beautify, etc.** — adorn the humble with faith, hope, joy, and peace. 5. **in glory** — the honourable condition to which they are raised. **upon their beds** — once a place of mourning (Psalm 6. 6). 6. **high (praises)** — or, deeds. They shall go forth as religious warriors, as once religious labourers (Nehemiah, 4. 17). 7. The destruction of the incorrigibly wicked attends the propagation of God's truth, so that the military successes of the Jews, after the captivity, typified the triumphs of the gospel. 9. **the judgment written** — either in God's decrees, or perhaps as Deuteronomy, 32. 41-43. **this honour** — *i.e.*, to be thus employed, will be an honourable service, to be assigned **his saints** — or, *godly ones* (Psalm 16. 3).

## PSALM CL.

**Ver. 1-6.** This is a suitable doxology for the whole book, reciting the "place, theme, mode, and extent of God's high praise."

1. **in his sanctuary** — on earth. **firmament, etc.** — which illustrates His power. 2. **mighty acts** — (Psalm 145. 4). **excellent greatness** — or, abundance of greatness. 3, 4. The *trumpet* was used to call religious assemblies; the *organ*, or pipe, a wind instrument, and the others were used in worship. 5. **cymbals** — suited to loud praise (Nehemiah, 12. 27). 6. **LIVING VOICES SHALL TAKE UP THE FAILING SOUNDS OF DEAD INSTRUMENTS, AND AS THEY CEASE ON EARTH, THOSE OF INTELLIGENT RANSOMED SPIRITS AND HOLY ANGELS, AS WITH THE SOUND OF MIGHTY THUNDERS, WILL PROLONG ETERNALLY, THE PRAISE, SAYING, "ALLELUIA! SALVATION, AND GLORY, AND HONOUR. AND POWER, UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD;" "ALLELUIA! FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH." AMEN!**

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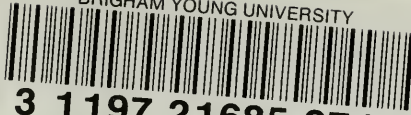








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